THE CASE STATED between the CHURCH of *ENGLAND* AND THE *DISSENTERS*,

Wherein the first is prov'd to be the Onely True CHURCH, and the latter plainly demonstrated from their own Writings, and those of all the Reformed Churches, to be downright Schismaticks.

Collected from the best Authors, on either side, and made Publick for the Conviction of those who have reviv'd matter of Controversy, and are finding fault at this time of day with the *London Cases*, when they dropt the Dispute while their Authors were living.

By *E. S.* D. D.

Victrix causa Deis placuit, sed victa Catoni.
——————Lucan.

London, Printed and Sold by *John Nut* near *Stationers-Hall*. MDCC.

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By [illegible] D.

Vitrea causa Deis placuit, sed victa Carons.
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TO THE
READER.

THE Diſſenters having again taken the Field, and reviv'd a Diſpute which had been ſome time laid aſide, I could neither think it uſeleſs or impertinent to riſe up in Defence of that Holy Religion, againſt which they are declar'd Enemies; and vindicate the Beſt of Churches in its Excellency of Government, and Purity of Doctrine. And tho' many Learned Perſons have already oblig'd the Publick with unanſwerable Diſcourſes in Her Favour, and left us ſufficient Arguments of the Goodneſs of Her Worſhip and Diſcipline, yet ſince Her Adverſaries have rally'd again, and taking the Advantage of the Death of ſome of Her Champions, as Dr. Scot, Dr. Calamy, &c. are employ'd in picking Holes in the London Caſes, I could not but think it very proper to remind 'em of the Strength of what they are attacking, and give 'em

on the true Knowledge of Her Beauties, *whilſt they are making Enquiries after Her* Faults. *In order to this, I have collected the Arguments which have been made uſe of on both ſides, and given the Reader the true State of a Controverſy, which none but Men of invincible Obſtinacy would maintain, after ſuch clear Convictions, that the Church which I have the Honour to be a Member of, by making uſe of Her Ceremonies, Worſhips God in the* Beauty of Holineſs, *and by breathing forth Her deſires in* Set Forms of Prayer, *ſhews a Reverence which is due to Him that made Her. I need ſay very little in relation to the Names of thoſe Authors I have had recourſe to on either ſide. They are Gentlemen of known Authority by their Writings, and are Eminent in the ſeveral Congregations they belong to. But the Reader will be ſatisfied after a due peruſal, that the Diſſenters* have Eyes and ſee not, *have* Ears *and will not* hear, *and like the* Adder *are deaf to the* voice of the Charmer, charm he never ſo wiſely; *elſe they would fling themſelves into the Arms of a Church whoſe Conſtitution is* Unity, *and whoſe Purity ſo Perſuaſive, as might make* even her Enemies to be at Peace with Her.

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THE CASE STATED, &c.

WHEN God Almighty first gave a Being to Man, and did him the Honour of permitting him to wear his *Makers* Image; He appointed him no other Guide to be directed by, than the Law of *Nature* or *Reason*, under the Government of which he liv'd the first two thousand Years after his Creation. But as the Law of Reason was not sufficient of it self, to keep Man in that unalterable Obedience which was due to his Creator; it was but necessary to give him more positive Rules to Walk by. Wherefore the Lord commanded *Moses* to write a Law for his People, which bears the Name of the *Mosaical*, and sometimes of the *Moral Law*, and is contain'd in the Old Testament. This Law was reveal'd to Men by

the Mediation of an Angel; but it consisting chiefly of Types and Ceremonies, and consequently not having that plainess which was necessary for Humane Capacities, as that of the New Testament, God did then often appear to his people Himself, and instruct 'em more immediately in the ways he would have 'em go by, and the paths it was His will they should shun.

And Men liv'd under this Law of the Old Testament, superadded to the Law of Nature (which is the same in reasonable Creatures) till God vouchsafed to convey the Knowledge of His pleasure to us, after a more full and excellent Manner, by the Mediation of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost, in the New Testament: And this Law of the New Testament is that which we are directed by to this very day, being absolv'd by it from our Obedience to a great part of the Old. *Vid. Galat.* 4.

And as this Law of the New Covenant was reveal'd to us after a more *excellent manner*, than that of the Old; so the Precepts which are contain'd in it are most extraordinary, having nothing in 'em which is either superfluous or wanting towards the leading Men to Heaven on very reasonable Conditions. It is so adapted

and fitted to all Conditions of Men, that the very meaneſt Capacities may eaſily underſtand every thing contain'd in it, which is neceſſary to their Salvation. And this Evangelical Law, Chriſt and his Apoſtles have left as a Rule for all ſucceeding Ages to walk by.

But notwithſtanding that our Saviour and his Apoſtles had left the World ſuch Plain and Poſitive Rules to walk by, that none that were not wilfully ſo cou'd be miſtaken in them; yet ſuch has been the unhappineſs of the Chriſtian Church, that it never wanted ſome within it of ſuch reſtleſs and peeviſh Spirits, as to diſturb its Peace and Quiet, by making Diviſions and Schiſms in it; which St. *Paul* foreſaw, when he told the Elders, *Acts* 20. 30. *Alſo of your ſelves ſhall Men ariſe, ſpeaking perverſe things, to draw Diſciples after them.* But though there have been always ſome Diviſions in the Church ever ſince the firſt Planting of it; yet for the firſt Three or Four Hundred Years, they were much fewer than what have been ſince, and thoſe that were, were much more diſcountenanc'd and oppos'd by the generality of Chriſtians, than they were afterwards.

In the Church of *Africa*, a little before St. *Auguſtine*'s Days, there aroſe the Schiſm of the *Donatiſts*; who ſeparated upon the

the account that the Biſhopricks were too Large, and the Power of the Biſhops too Great. And becauſe the Miniſters were not ſo Able and Holy Men as they ſhould be, and becauſe they diſlik'd the Liturgies and Publick Prayers of the Church, and for ſuch-like Reaſons. And a little before in the Third Century, began the *Novatian* Schiſm at *Rome*; for that *Novatus* thinking the Biſhopricks too Large, would needs be choſen Biſhop in the ſame City where *Cornelius* was choſen before: But both theſe Schiſms were condemned, This by the Council of *Carth.* and the Council of *Conſtantinople*, and by St. *Cyprian*, Ep. 52. N. 4, *&c.* And That of the *Donatiſts* by all the Catholick Biſhops at the Conference at *Carth.* See *Conference of the Third Day*, Chap. 4. And by St. *Auguſtine* in his Books againſt *Permenian*, *Petilian*, and the other *Donatiſt* Biſhops.

But not long after, about the Fifth and Sixth Century, the Errors, and Corruptions in the Church, began to Increaſe more abundantly, and appear more bare-fac'd and openly, than formerly they had done; for that as the *Roman* Empire began to decline, there follow'd a general decay of Learning, and groſs Ignorance had over-ſpread the Earth; inſomuch, that many of the Prieſts themſelves cou'd

cou'd not read *Latin*; and then it was no difficult Matter to bring in what Hereſies and Schiſms Men wou'd. And this was the time that moſt of the Errors and Corruptions of the Church of *Rome*, were introduced, as Dr. *Comber* obſerves, in his *Advice to the Roman Catholicks of* England.

Under this Cloud of Ignorance and Darkneſs, did the Church lie hid for many Hundreds of Years; till about the Year 1510. when it pleaſed God to open the Eyes of ſome of his People, and to let them ſee thoſe great Abuſes with which the World had been ſo long abus'd, and under the Burden of which, the Church had groan'd for ſo many Hundred Years. And though here in *England*, there has been for many Years before the Reformation, a ſtrong Diſpoſition that way, as may appear by the ſeveral Acts of Parliament made ſince the Conqueſt, to leſſen and take away the Pope's Power and Authority, as well in Eccleſiaſtical as Civil Matters within theſe Kingdoms. See *Coke*'s *5th Rep. De jure Regis Eccleſiaſtico.* Yet the Pope had always ſo great an Intereſt at Court, and the Clergy in the Nation, having got moſt of the Lands into their own Hands, that this glorious Deſign cou'd never be accompliſh'd, till it pleaſed God to make an

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open breach between King *H.* 8. and the Pope; upon which, he totally rejected the Pope's Supremacy, and assum'd to himself the stile of Supream Head of the Church in these Nations, and Defender of the Faith. And thus the Pope being quite forsaken, 'twas likely Popery wou'd not live long, having lost its Infallible Head. And so indeed it prov'd; For in King *Edw.* 6. days, Popery was quite turn'd out of Doors, by the general consent of the whole Nation; whose Example many of the Churches beyond Seas follow'd. And thus the general Reformation was happily begun; and the Christian Church being stript of all its antick Disguises, began to appear again, and shine forth in its natural Form and Brightness.

But because 'twas impossible to bring the People clearly off, from what they and their Ancestors had been bred up in, and accustom'd to for so many Ages; or to make them capable of distinguishing on a sudden, between things hurtful in Religion, and things Indifferent; therefore 'twas thought convenient, that no Alterations shou'd be made in things Indifferent, nor any Scruples rais'd about them; which wou'd at that time have hinder'd much the Reformation, since many were with difficulty enough brought

brought to things neceſſary: So that for this Reaſon, as alſo to let our Enemies ſee, that we did not break Communion with them for Indifferent things, many things were retain'd at the beginning of the Reformation, that were afterwards Reform'd. In the days of *Edw.* VI. the Liturgy and Publick Service of the Church was Corrected and Amended: And this was done with all the Care and Deliberation imaginable, and the King and Parliament took the beſt Advice in the doing of it that cou'd be had either at home or abroad. Which makes me, indeed, admire to hear every illiterate Diſſenter find ſo many Faults in the Liturgies and Worſhip of the Church of *England*, that was ſo well approv'd of then by all thoſe Holy Biſhops and Martyrs that were our firſt Reformers, and by *Calvin*, *Bucer*, and all the Eminent Divines beyond Seas: 'Tis very ſtrange to think that ſuch Excellent Men, and Men of ſuch indefatigable Pains, and great Integrity, as *Cranmer*, *Ridly*, *Latimer*, and *Bradford*, &c. were, after all their diligent Enquiry, and fervent Prayers to God, that he would direct them in the Performance and Management of ſo great a Work, cou'd not after all, ſpy ſo much as a mote of Unlawfulneſs, in thoſe things that now every Diſſenting Preacher, though never

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ver ſo raw or illiterate; yea, and the very meaneſt of the People can ſee ſuch Beams in. 'Tis certain, that our terms of Communion are the ſame, or rather eaſier now than they were then, as moſt of the Diſſenters will allow; and as Dr. *Stillingfleet* has prov'd at large, in his *Miſchiefs of Separation*.

During all the Reign of King *Edward* VI, there were no Diviſions in this Church about theſe Matters. There might have been ſome in thoſe Days that might have wiſh'd for a farther Reformation, as no Church ever yet wanted ſuch; But there was no ſuch thing as Separation from the Church, and going to ſeparate Meetings upon that account: No, 'twas ſo far from that, that when actual Separation was firſt begun in Queen *Elizabeth*'s Days, thoſe who practis'd it, were ſeverely Condemned by moſt of thoſe who were very deſirous of a farther Reformation.

The time when Separation firſt began in the Church of *England*, was about the Beginning of Queen *Elizabeth*'s Reign: For after Queen *Mary*'s Death, the Miniſters and others, who were Baniſhed and Fled in her time, began to flock back again into *England*; but the Impreſſions which were made on ſome of our Divines, during their Baniſhment; eſpecially thoſe who continued at *Geneva*,

Geneva, (a place always inveterate againſt Ceremonies) did not wear off at their return home; but after a little while, they began to inſinuate into the People (who are ever fond of Novelties) a hatred to the Livery of Antichriſt, as they call'd the Veſtments, and Ceremonies; upon which, ſome of the People began to Separate; and this was the firſt occaſion of preſſing Uniformity with Laws and Penalties. The Queen and Parliament now began to ſee it Neceſſary for the Quiet of the Church and Nation, and for the avoiding farther Diviſions upon this account, that all the Clergy ſhou'd give ſome aſſurance of their Conformity and Obedience to the Laws of this Land, and the Religion Eſtabliſh'd by Law, and to the Orders and Diſcipline of the Church, agreeable to Law. And accordingly, certain Articles and Subſcriptions were agreed on; and ſuch of the Clergy as would not Subſcribe thereto, were Suſpended: They who were Suſpended, writ to their Oracle at *Geneva*, *Beza*, who was a Man of greateſt Authority with them, to know what they ſhou'd do; *Beza* adviſes them, That if they cannot otherwiſe be continued in their Offices, but by wronging their Conſciences, that they ſhould ſubmit, and live quietly, but by no means to exerciſe their Function

Action against the Will of their Queen and Bishops; for, says he, *We tremble at the thoughts of that* *: But he tells them farther, That though he does not approve of the Ceremonies, yet being [illegible] Evil in themselves, he does not think them [illegible] that moment as that the Ministers shou'd leave their Functions for them, or the People forsake the Ordinances, rather than hear those who did Conform. And it seems, indeed, that the more Serious and Learned of those Divines, who in their Banishment had suck'd in a Dislike to the Church of *England* way of Worship, did not think fit to Separate from it upon that account, or to endeavour too hastily the Reforming of it; for Dr. *Burnet* in his Book of Travels, tells us, That in *Switzerland* he met with several Letters from some of our English Clergy to *Bullinger*, who had procur'd a kind Reception to be given to several of them in *Switzerland*, during the Persecution of Queen *Mary*. By which Letters it appears, that several of the Clergy who had been beyond Seas, upon their return Home, did endeavour to Perswade Queen *Elizabeth* to let the Matters of the Habits for the Clergy, *&c.* fall; Particularly *Sands*, afterwards Archbishop of *York*, *Horn* afterwards Bishop of *Winchester*,

* See Dr. Stillingfleet's *Mischief of Separation*, Pag. 20, 21, *&c.*

Winchester, *Jewel* and *Grindal*: But *Grindal* in one of his Letters to *Bullinger*, says, They were all resolved to submit to the Laws, and to wait for a fit opportunity to reverse them: And he laments the ill Effects of the Opposition that some had made to them; He also thanks *Bullinger* for the Letter he wrote to justifie the lawful Use of the Habits, *&c.* And in fine, they all allow'd the lawfulness, but not the fitness of them; and that they ought to submit to the Law, till it shou'd please God to reverse it lawfully. See *Burnet's Travels*, p. 51, 52.

But though the wiser sort among them did not think fit to proceed to actual Separation from the Church, upon the account of those indifferent things; yet some there were of a more fierce and turbulent Spirit, who had not Patience to wait God's leisure, but either a Reformation must be made presently according to their wild Notions; and the Queen and Parliament must tack about immediately to their Pleasures, or else to your Tents, O *Israel*; They will set up Churches of their own, and forsake us utterly as a Superstitious and Idolatrous Church, not fit to be communicated with.

And thus began our unhappy Divisions in the Church of *England*. I shall not trou-

ble my self to trace this Matter through the Reigns of Queen *Elizabeth*, King *James* the First, and King *Charles* the First; nor to shew how they daily increas'd and grew wider: Nor the many Sub-Divisions, and Scandalous Breaches that were daily made among themselves, ever since the beginning of Separation: As between *Brown* and *Barrow*, *Brown* and *Harrison*, *Barrow* and *Johnson*, *Johnson* and *Ainsworth*; who all left *England* to gather Separate Churches to themselves in the *Low-Countries*; But scarce had been well there, till they fell out all among themselves; one Man and his Company being accurs'd, and avoided by the other and his Followers, and the one Church receiving the Persons excommunicated by the other; till they became ridiculous to Spectators, and at last some of them were glad to return into *England*. This Matter has been so fully related by Dr. *Stillingfleet*, in his *Mischiefs of Separation*, p. 51, 52, *&c.* that 'twere needless here to repeat it.

I shall only take notice, that ever since King *James* the Second's Accession to the Crown, the Church of *England* had laid aside all thoughts of Controversie with the Dissenters, in hopes that they wou'd have joyn'd for their common Safety with them,

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in ſtopping the Inundation of Popery, that was ready to break in upon theſe Nations, and ſwallow them both up. But while moſt of our Eminent Divines of the Church of *England*, as Dr. *Tillotſon*, Dr. *Stillingfleet*, Dr. *Burnet*, Dr. *Comber*, Dr. *Sherlock*, and the reſt, were imploy'd in writing againſt the Incendiaries of *Rome*; the Diſſenters, our Brethren, inſtead of aſſiſting us, were making themſelves ready for War with us; as appear'd ſoon after. For when God Almighty had happily plac'd King *William* in the Throne, a Convocation was immediately call'd, in hopes that ſome Terms of Accommodation might have been Agreed upon between us; And which, in all probability, wou'd have taken Effect, if the Diſſenting Miniſters had been as forward as we; for how much inclin'd our Clergy were to a Reconciliation (notwithſtanding the Aſperſion laid on them by the Diſſenters, of their having no ſuch Deſign) does ſufficiently appear by ſeveral of their Writings; See Dr. *Tillotſon*'s Sermon Preached at the *Torkſhire* Feaſt, *Anno* 1679. *Pag.* 28. And Dr. *Sherlock*'s Sermon before the Lord Mayor, *Nov.* 1688. See likewiſe the Petition of the Archbiſhop of *Canterbury*, and the other Biſhops; for which they were committed to the *Tower*:

And ſee the Articles recommended by the Archbiſhop of *Canterbury* to all the Biſhops within his Province. And Dr. *Stillingfleet*'s Preface to his *Miſchiefs of Separation*. By all which, it ſufficiently appears how deſirous they were for a Reconciliation. But inſtead of liſtning to any ſuch thing, does our Diſſenters break forth into open Acts of Hoſtility, and at that very time when we were actually Treating of Accommodation with them, do they Publiſh ſeveral of their Books, one upon the back of another; in which, they endeavour nothing leſs than the total Overthrow of our Church, by pretending to prove, That the Conſtitution of our Church is New, and Unlawful; and that our Worſhip is Idolatrous and Sinful. Had this been at a Time when their way of Worſhip was not tolerated, or ours impos'd on them with Penalties, they had been the more excuſable; Or, had we began to expoſe their *Extempore* way of Praying, as we might eaſily have done; but at ſuch a time as that was, to become the Aggreſſors, was ungrateful as well as unſeaſonable. But now, ſince the Diſſenters have thought fit to revive the Controverſie between us, I hope they cannot take it unkindly of us, if we endeavour to Vindicate our Church, and to remove thoſe

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Aſperſions that they have groundleſly caſt upon her. But this has been done ſo learnedly and fully by ſo many of our Learned Divines already, that I will not pretend to do it better, or to ſay much more than what they have ſaid before me; I ſhall only here lay down briefly the Subſtance of what I have Collected out of the beſt Authors on both ſides, that have writ lately on this Subject: For there may be ſome who wou'd be willing to be ſatisfied in this Matter, and yet can neither beſtow the Time nor Pains to read all the Books of Controverſie over, which have been writ on this Subject.

Firſt then, We will examine the Pleas which the Diſſenters uſe for Separation, and ſhow the inſufficiency of them; and that they do not juſtifie Separation according to their own Principles.

All the Pleas at this time made uſe of for Separation, may be reduced to theſe Three Heads:

Firſt, Such as relate to the Conſtitution of our Church.

Second, To the terms of Communion with it.

Third, To the Conſciences of Diſſenters.

As to the Firſt, to wit, ſuch as relate to the Conſtitution of our Churches; They ſay,

First, That our Parochial Churches are not according to Christ's Institution, as being different from those of the Congregational way. Secondly, That our Diocesan Bishops are Unlawful. Thirdly, That our National Church has no Foundation, and wants Discipline; all being swallowed up in the Bishops: And the Pastors of every Parish who ought to have full Power to execute every part of it, are depriv'd thereof. And Fourthly, That the People are depriv'd of their right of chusing their own Pastors.

First, say they, Our Parochial Churches are not according to Christ's Institution. For Christ, they say, instituted no other kind of Churches, than particular Congregations, to which he gave full Power and Authority to govern themselves, distinctly and Independent of all other Churches.

But where have they Authority for this Opinion? Where do they find that Churches were limitted to particular Congregations? not in Scripture; for there is no tolerable Proof, that the Churches planted by the Apostles, were of this Nature. 'Tis possible at first there might have been no more Christians in a City, than might meet together in one Congregation; But where doth it appear, that when they multiply'd into more Congre-

Congregations, they made new and distinct Churches under new Officers, with a separate Power of Government; of this Dr. *Stillingfleet* says, he is well assur'd there is no mark or Footstep in the New Testament, or the whole History of the Primitive Church. If they will follow the plain instances of Scripture, they may better limit Churches to Private Families, than to particular Congregations; for of that we have a plain instance in Scripture, *Rom.* 16. 3. 5. *Col.* 4. 15. in the House of *Priscilla* and *Aquilla*, but not a word of the other: And if they wou'd keep to these plain instances of Scripture, they might fully enjoy the Liberty of their Consciences, and avoid the Scandal of breaking the Laws.

But the Scripture is so far from making every Congregation an Independent Church, that it plainly shews us, the Notion of a Church was then the same with a Diocess, or all the Christians of a City, which were under the Inspection of one Bishop: For, if we observe the Language of the Scripture, we shall find this Observation not once to fail; that when Churches are spoken of, they are the Churches of a Province: As the Churches of *Judæa*, 1 *Thess.* 2. 14. The Churches of *Asia*, 1 *Cor.* 16. 19. Of *Syria* and *Cilicia*, *Acts* 15. 41.

Churches of *Galatia*, 1 *Cor.* 16. 1. *Gal.* 1. 2. Churches of *Macedonia*, 2 *Cor.* 8. 1. But when all the Chriſtians of a City are ſpoken of, it is ſtill call'd the Church of that City; as, the Church of *Antioch*, the Church at *Corinth*, the Church of *Epheſus*, &c. So that it ſeems plain from the Teſtimony of Scripture, that Churches were not limitted to particular Congregations, unleſs they will ſay, that all the Chriſtians in the largeſt of theſe Cities mention'd in Scripture, were no more than cou'd conveniently meet in one Congregation; which ſhall be ſhown to be otherwiſe hereafter.

But ſuppoſe we ſhou'd grant that the Apoſtolick Churches were Congregational (as 'tis plain they were not) what then? that might have been from the Circumſtances of Times, or ſmall number of Chriſtians in thoſe Days; muſt it therefore follow that they muſt always continue ſo? Why do they not waſh one anothers Feet, as Chriſt did, and commanded his Apoſtles to do the ſame*: So the firſt Civil Government was by God's own Inſtitution over Families; they may by the ſame Rule think themſelves bound

* *And if they muſt keep ſo preciſely to the Practice of thoſe Days, why does any of their Miniſters marry a Second Wife? For St.* Paul *ſays plainly*, Let Biſhops and Deacons be the Husbands of one Wife, 1 *Tim.* 3. v. 2. & 12.

bound to overthrow Kingdoms, to bring things back to God's firſt Inſtitution. From whence it appears how ridiculous that fancy of theirs is, That the Scripture is the only Rule of all things pertaining to Diſcipline and Worſhip; and that we muſt ſtick ſo preciſely to the Letter of it, and to the practice of thoſe Days, as that 'tis not lawful to vary from it in any little indifferent Circumſtance for the ſake of Publick Order, or Conveniency.

But as this notion of Congregational Churches does not agree with the words of the New Teſtament; ſo neither does it with the Judgment and Practice of the Primitive Church; For by the ancient Canons of the Church it appears, That the Notion of a Church, was the ſame with that of a Dioceſs, which comprehended many Congregations, or Pariſhes. See Canons *Nicen.* 6, 15, 16. *Conſtant.* c. 6. *Chalcedon* 17. 20. 26. *Antioch* c. 2. 5. *Codex Eccleſ. Africæ*, c. 53. 55. *Concil. Gangræ.* c. 6. *Concil. Carthag.* c. 10, 11.

And thus much as to the firſt Objection againſt the Conſtitution of our Church, as differing from thoſe of the Congregational way; and therefore not of Chriſt's Inſtitution.

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The Second Objection againſt the Conſtitution of our Church is, That our Dioceſan Churches and Biſhops are unlawful; For ſay they, 'Tis making a new Species of Churches and Church-Government, without God's appointment; For, ſays Mr. *Baxter*, according to Chriſt's Inſtitution, no Church muſt be bigger, than that the ſame Biſhop may perform the Paſtoral Office to them in preſent Communion: And ſo he will have three ſorts of Biſhops by Divine Right: Firſt, General Biſhops, that in every Nation are over many Churches. Secondly, *Epiſcopi Gregis*, or Ruling Paſtors of Single Congregations, which are all true Presbyters. Thirdly, *Epiſcopi Præſides*; which are the Preſidents of the Presbyters in particular Churches: This is Mr. *Baxter*'s Notion of Biſhops: But others are not of his Mind, and will allow of but one kind of Biſhop, and ſuch they make the Paſtor of every Congregation.

But that both theſe Notions of Epiſcopacy are falſe, will appear; For that Firſt, 'twas an inviolable Rule in the Primitive Church, that there muſt be but one Biſhop in a City, though 'twere never ſo large; for our Saviour having left no Rule about Limits, the Apoſtles follow'd the Form of the Empire, planting

planting in every City a complete and entire Church, whoſe Biſhop, as to his Power and Juriſdiction, in Eccleſiaſtical Matters, reſembled that of the Chief Magiſtrate of the City; the Presbyters, that of the Senates; and the ſeveral Churches, the ſeveral Corporations. So ſays Dr. *Still.* in his *Miſchiefs of Separation*, p. 237. and quotes *Origen*, c. *Celſ.* l. 3. and Dr. *Maurice* in his *Def. of Dioceſ. Epiſcopacy*, p. 377, *&c.* affirms the ſame, and proves it at large. And as far as the Territories of the City extended it ſelf, ſo far did the Dioceſs of the Biſhop extend; for the Church and the City had but one Territory.

But though this be a thing agreed upon by moſt Learned Men of all Perſuaſions, that there was but one Biſhop in a City in the Primitive Church; yet becauſe ſome may be ſo hardy as to deny this, I will appeal to the Practice of the *African* Church; for which Mr. *Baxter*, Dr. *Owen*, and the reſt of the Diſſenters, expreſs an eſteem above all other Churches. 'Twas an inviolable Rule among the *African* Churches, that there muſt be but one Biſhop in a City, though never ſo large and populous. See *Cod. Eccl. Africæ*, c. 71. And at the famous Conference at *Carthage*, between the Catholick and Donatiſt Biſhops, by the Command of *Conſtantine* the

the Emperor, who was become Christian, the Rule on both sides agreed was, but One Bishop in a City, or Diocess. See *Conference of the First Day*. And if there cou'd have been more than one Bishop in a City, the two great Schisms of the Donatists in *Africa*, and the Novatian at *Rome*, might have been avoided; but instead hereof, see how St. *Cyprian* among others, aggravates the Schism of *Novatius*, for being chosen Bishop in the same City where *Cornelius* was chosen before; *For*, says he, *since there cannot be a second after the first, whosoever is made Bishop, where one is made already, is not another Bishop, but none at all*, Cypr. Epist. 52. n. 4. And the same St. *Cyprian* in his Epistle 55. n. 6. 9. declares, That to have only one Bishop in a City, was the best means to prevent Schism. See St. *Cypr. de Unitate Eccles.* n. 3, 4. And St. *Augustine* in his Epistle 162. to the same purpose.

But now that 'tis so plainly prov'd that there was never allow'd but one Bishop in a City in the Primitive Church, they have no way to reconcile this to their Hypothesis, but by endeavouring to prove that either the Cities were very small in those days, or else the number of Christians in them were so few, as that they might all conveniently meet

meet in one Congregation. And this they are not ſatisfied to do in the ordinary Cities, which Mr. *Clarkſon* in his Book of *Primitive Epiſcopacy* affirms, were no larger than our ordinary Market-Towns in *England*. But even in the very largeſt, and moſt populous Cities, they will not allow that there were more Chriſtians than cou'd conveniently meet together in one Church to ſerve God; as in *Rome*, *Alexandria*, *Conſtantinople*, *Carthage*, and the reſt: All which far exceeded any now in the World, both for largeneſs and number of People. This ſeems to be very ſtrange. Old *Rome* was at that time a City ſo large and populous, that it excell'd *London*, as it is at this day, as far as *London* now does New *Rome*, and had by Computation at that time above 1000000 Inhabitants; as Dr. *Maurice* ſhows in his *Defence of Dioceſan Epiſcopacy*, p. 340. And ſeems indeed to be very probable, if one conſiders thoſe vaſt and mighty Pieces of Workmanſhip, that appear to have been done there; the Ruins of which are to be ſeen at this day, as Dr. *Burnet* in his *Travels* tells us, who gathers from thence, That that City muſt have been vaſtly populous about that time. And it was in *Aurelius* his days 50 Miles in Circumference, Dr. *M.* p. 212. And yet will

Mr.

Mr. *Clarkſon* allow no more Chriſtians in this great City than cou'd meet in one Congregation. So of *Alexandria*, which was 15 Miles in Circumference, according to *Pliny*, l. 5. 9. and the reſt, all greater far than *London* now is. But to ſerve their turn they will reduce them all to the narrow limits of a ſingle Congregation, and by conſequence give all the reſt to the Devil, by making them Unchriſtian, Hereticks, Schiſmaticks, *&c.*

'Tis ſtrange that Chriſtianity ſhou'd make no better a Progreſs, conſidering the largeneſs of the Cities, and Multitude of People in them; and conſidering the Care and Induſtry of the Apoſtles and Learned Fathers of thoſe Ages, and their extraordinary Gifts; that in ſo large and populous a City as *Rome*, Chriſtianity ſhou'd gain no more Proſelytes in 300 Years, than cou'd meet all in one Church, notwithſtanding St. *Paul* himſelf had Preach'd there for many Years: The very *Quakers* in *London*, which is not comparable to Old *Rome*, have made more Proſelytes already, than the Apoſtles in much longer time; for were all the *Quakers* in *London* aſſembled in one Congregation, I doubt that never a Church in the Kingdom wou'd be found large enough to contain them.

But

But besides, if the number of Christians were so few as these Dissenters wou'd make them, how was it possible for them to possess themselves of the whole Roman Empire in less than 300 Years? They had no Interest at Court nor in the Army; but were persecuted by the Emperors all that time, unless in two Reigns; so that there can be no other Human Cause assign'd for it, but their great Numbers.

But farther 'tis plain that there were some great Cities entirely Christian from the Apostles days, as *Cesaria*, and *Lydda*, *Acts* 9.35. and others. So that in the first 300 Years, whole Cities and Countries being become Christian, as *Eusebius* affirms, *Præp. Evang.* l.1. p.12,13. 'twas impossible for a single Congregation to contain a quarter of the Christians of a City, much less of a whole Diocess; For besides the large and populous City, every Bishop had a Territory within his Diocess, which extended it self for several Miles round the City. For every City had a large Territory, as it were a County round about it, which was under the Jurisdiction of the Civil Magistrate, who govern'd the City, and as far as the Jurisdiction of the Magistrate reach'd in Civil Matters, so far did the Jurisdiction of the Bishop reach in Ecclesiastical

ſtical Matters. See *Can. Apoſtolic.* 34. by which a Biſhop is forbid to do any thing without the conſent of his Metropolitan or Archbiſhop, but what relates to his own Dioceſs, and the Territories under it; And ſee *Can. Antioch* 9. & 10.

But that the Biſhops Territories and Juriſdiction extended far beyond the Walls or Bounds of the City is moſt evident; for *Theodoret*, who was Biſhop of *Cyrus*, had a Dioceſs 40 Miles ſquare, and yet he reckon'd his Epiſcopacy of Divine Inſtitution. See his *Epiſt.* 42. And he had within his Dioceſs 800 Pariſh Churches, as appears by his *Epiſt.* 113. to *Leo.* This is an Inſtance ſo clear againſt our Diſſenters, that Mr. *Baxter*, and Mr. *Clarkſon*, and the reſt, have no way to Anſwer it, but firſt that it came from the *Vatican* Library; which Objection is fully removed by Dr. *Stillingfleet* in his *Miſchief of Separation*, p. 256. and by Dr. *Maur. Def. of Dioc. Epiſc.* p. 396. and this Epiſt. of *Theod.* prov'd to be his own, by comparing it with his other Writings; and alſo by the clear Teſtimony of *Liberatus*, who infallibly knew *Theodoret*'s Stile and Writings. Neither does it follow, that becauſe it came from the *Vatican* Library, therefore it muſt not be Authentick: But when People are Drowning, rather

father than ſink they will catch hold of a Bull-ruſh.

The other Exception they take to this Teſtimony of *Theodoret* is, That he was not Biſhop of a ſingle Dioceſs, but of a Province; and that *Theodoret* was an Archbiſhop: but that *Cyprus*, of which he was then Biſhop, was no Metropolis at that time, nor *Theodoret* Primate of a Province, but under a Metropolitan, appears by his 16 *Ep.* and by his 81, 82, 34, 94, and 161. *Alexander* was then his Metropolitan.

But *Theodoret* was not the only Biſhop that had ſuch a large Dioceſs; for St. *Chryſoſtom* had one full as large, and which contained as many Pariſhes; he was Biſhop of *Conſtantinople*, and all the Territories thereto belonging, and did not think it in his Conſcience too large; for if he did, ſo good a Man as he, would either have divided or quitted it. And *Athanaſius* was Biſhop of *Alexandria* and the Territories belong to it; for he ſays, *Ap. p.* 781, 802. *Maoretis* is a Region belonging to *Alexandria*, and all the Churches there are immediately ſubject to the Biſhop of *Alexandria*.

But becauſe Dr. *Owen*, Mr. *Baxter*, Mr. *Cotton* and the reſt, have made choice of the Church of *Carthage* in *Africk*, in St. *Cypri-*

an's time, to make their appeals to; Dr. *Stillingfleet*, to avoid all Cavils, (as he tells us) has choſen that very Church to be decided by, as to the Epiſcopal Government now in diſpute between us. And therefore, firſt he proves that there were a great number of Presbyters, belonging to the Church of *Carthage* at that time; and therefore not likely to be one ſingle Congregation. And this he proves, out of St. *Cyprian*'s own *Epiſtles* in his Baniſhment. Particularly in his *5th. Book*, *Ep.* 28. he complains, that a great number of his Clergy were abſent, and the few that remain'd, were hardly ſufficient for their Work.

And that theſe Presbyters, and the whole Church were under the particular care and government of St. *Cyprian*, as their Biſhop, appears by his own words, *Lib.* 3. *Ep.* 10, and 12. to the People of *Carthage*; he complains to them of his Presbyters, that they did not reſerve to their Biſhop that honour due to his place; for that they received Penitents to Communion, without *Impoſition of Hands* by the Biſhop, *&c.* And in his *Epiſt.* 28. he threatens to Excommunicate thoſe Presbyters that ſhould do ſo for the future. And all the other Biſhops gave their approbation to St. *Cyprian* for ſo doing.

And

And the ſame St. *Cyprian* in his 3 *Book*, *Ep.* 65. tells them that a Biſhop in the Church is in the place of Chriſt; and that Diſobedience to him is the occaſion of Schiſms and Diſorders. See more fully concerning this matter, in Dr. *Stillingfleet's Miſchiefs of Separation*, *p.* 228, 229. *&c.* And now ſince Dr. *Owen*, Mr. *Baxter* and the reſt, have agreed to appeal to the Church of *Carthage*, we muſt ſuppoſe they allow no Deviations in that Church, from the Primitive Inſtitution, and what that was then, any one may judge.

And St. *Auguſtine* was another Biſhop in the *African* Church; he was Biſhop of *Hippo Regia*, the Dioceſs of which extended at leaſt Forty Miles, as appears by St. *Auguſtine's* own *Epiſt.* 262.

'Tis true, the *African* Church came moſt near the Congregational way of any other, the Dioceſs being ſmaller by reaſon of the many Sectaries there; the *Donatiſts*, and many others: And that is the Reaſon, Mr. *Baxter* and the reſt expreſs ſo great an Eſteem for it. But that their Biſhopricks were much too large, to ſerve either the *Presbyterians* or *Independents* turn; and, that they never allowed more than one Biſhop in the largeſt Cities, ſufficiently appears by what has

been said. And in the *African* Code, there is a Canon that says expresly; no Bishop shall leave his Cathedral Church, and go to any other Church in his Diocess to reside there, See *Codex Eccl. Africæ c.* 71. Which shows that the Bishops Territories and Jurisdiction extended into distant Places from the City, as well in the *African* Churches as in others.

I shall only add to this, that *Calvin* look'd upon it as a Thing out of dispute among Learned Men, that a Church did not only take in the *Christians* of a City in the Primitive Times, but of the adjacent Country also. See *Calv. Instit. l.* 4. *c.* 4. *n.* 2.

But though there were never more than one Bishop in a City, in the Primitive Church, * yet some Bishops have had Two or more Cities in their Diocess. *Timothy* was Bishop of *Farmissus* and *Eudocias*; *Athanasius* was Bishop of *Diveltus* and *Sozopolis*. And there have been some Bishopricks that have had no City at all in them, but only Villages, for there were some Countries that had no Cities in them; so have we at this Day, Bishops in *Ireland* and *Wales* that have no Cities in their Diocess: But it cannot be prov'd that the Jurisdiction of the Bishop,

* V. *Conc. Eph. Part* 2. *Act.* 1.

and

and the extent of his Diocefs was confin'd to any ſingle Village. So far from that, that by the Canon of *Sardica* VI. all the Biſhops Aſſembled at *Sardica* agree, That it ſhall by no means be lawful to Ordain any Biſhops in Villages or ſmall Cities, that the Dignity of a Biſhop may not be contemptible from the meanneſs of the Place.

But, ſays Mr. *Clarkſon* and the reſt, The Apoſtles Ordain'd Elders in every Church, and then Mr. *Clarkſon* names the places, to wit, *Antioch*, *Iconium*, *Lyſtra*, and other Villages: and theſe Elders or Presbyters they will have Biſhops. But firſt, I ſay, That during the Apoſtle's days, the names Biſhop and Presbyter were commonly uſed, the one for the other; (but not after, as ſhall be ſhow'd hereafter) and therefore theſe Elders, or Presbyters here ſpoken of may be as well taken for ordinary Presbyters or Prieſts, as for Biſhops. But allowing theſe Presbyters were Biſhops, what advantage will it be to them? for firſt, it does not appear, that the Apoſtles confin'd their Authority to thoſe places, but the contrary is evident; and unleſs they can prove this, it will not ſerve their turn. But, Secondly, theſe Cities over which the Apoſtles appointed Elders, were large Cities at

that time, by much too great to come together in one Congregation. *Iconium* was then a Metropolitan, and had many other Cities under it. And the reſt were all large Cities.

But before I conclude this point I muſt make one Obſervation, and that is, That Mr. *Clarkſon*, to prove that a Biſhop of a City had no more but one Congregation, undertakes to ſhew how ſmall ſome Cities were; but 'tis remarkable he quotes for his Authority ſome Author who ſpeaks of them long before there were any Biſhops; and becauſe they might have been ſmall places then, will needs have them to be ſo in the days of the Apoſtles, which is very ridiculous; for under the *Roman* Emperours, both the *Roman* and the *Grecian* Cities were at their height, and did very much ſurpaſs both for their magnificence and number of people, any that have been before or ſince; nor is this to be wonder'd at, ſince our Cities do now ſtand upon much narrower Foundations as to their conſtitution; our Cities have ſeldom any Liberties half a mile beyond their Walls; and are generally but an Aſſembly of Trades-men: whereas the *Roman* Cities had each a Territory, as it were a County belonging to it, which was under the jurisdiction of the City

City Magiſtrate; and the Citizens were the Lords of the adjacent Country.

I have now ſhew'd that the Government of the Church by Dioceſan Biſhops, is agreeable to the practice of the beſt and pureſt Ages of the Church, and to the Judgment of the wiſeſt and holieſt Fathers of it. And that their Power and Juriſdiction was as abſolute, and extended as far, or farther than any Biſhops this day in *England*. I ſhall ſhew hereafter that Epiſcopal Government, as now ſettled in *England*, has been, and is at this day, commended and approved of by all the moſt Eminent Divines beyond Seas.

Perhaps ſome may ſay, if the Government of the Church by Dioceſan Biſhops, be ſo agreeable to that of the Primitive Church; and approved of by other reform'd Churches, as we pretend it is; how comes it that they all did not follow the pattern of *England*, and become all Dioceſan Churches? I anſwer, They may as well ask us, Why all the Nations of the World that were ſubject to the *Roman* Emperors, did not upon the decay of the *Roman* Empire, when they reſum'd their juſt Rights of Government to themſelves, become all Monarchies, according to the Pattern of *England*. Some Nations

beſides *England*, *Ireland* and *Scotland*, did aſſume Epiſcopal Government; as *Denmark*, *Sweden*, &c. but perhaps it was not conſiſtent with the preſent Circumſtances, or Politick Conſtitution of all places at the time of the Reformation, to ſet up Epiſcopal Government, as indeed it was not. And therefore ſince neither Epiſcopal, nor any other particular kind of Government is ſo eſſential to a Church, as that a true Church may not be without it in caſe of indiſpenſible Neceſſity; they put themſelves ſome under one Form of Government, ſome under another, as was moſt agreeable to their preſent conſtitution; but with this Caution every where, That all Proteſtants of every whole Church, be the Government what it will, ſhould be oblig'd to Conform to the Eſtabliſh'd Church in which they liv'd: For though every National or whole Church had a Power to chuſe what kind of Government they pleaſed for themſelves, yet 'twas never allow'd that particular ſcrupulous People among themſelves, had Power to do ſo too; This Power of ſubdividing was never pretended to, nor practis'd in any other Nation ſince the Reformation, but in *England*. So that though they do all allow the Antiquity and Uſefulneſs of Epiſcopal Government; yet ſince 'tis not

Eſſential

Essential to a true Church no more than that of the *Presbyterian* or *Independent*, nor convenient at this time for all places, some may refuse it; and yet it does not follow that we in *England* should do so, since 'tis convenient for us, and more agreeable to the Laws and Constitution of these Kingdoms, and comes by much nearer the Practice of the Primitive Churches, than any other whatsoever.

But they say, we make Episcopal Government Essential to a true Church, for that we will suffer none to execute the Office of a Minister here in *England*, unless they be ordain'd by a Bishop. To this I answer, 'Tis plain, we do not make Episcopal Government Essential to a true Church; For we allow all the Reform'd Churches to be true Churches, and Communicate with them, and yet some of them have no Diocesan Bishops. 'Tis true, by the Laws of this Church and Nation, none are to be admitted to execute the Office of a Minister in any Cathedral or Parish Church or Chapel, nor to hold any Ecclesiastical Benefice within these Kingdoms, but such as are willing to submit to the Orders and Government of this Church, and the Laws of the Land: And therefore since both the Laws of this Church and Nation do require that all Ministers who desire to serve

in

in this Church, ſhall declare publickly that they aſſent to and approve of our Form of Worſhip, *&c.* and are willing to uſe the ſame as the Church appoints, and that they ſhall receive their Ordination, and Licence to execute their Office from the Biſhops; 'Tis but reaſonable that ſuch as want theſe Qualifications, ſhou'd be refus'd the Liberty of executing their Office in theſe Kingdoms. * But the reaſon we refuſe them is not ſo much becauſe that *Presbyterian Ordination* does not make them true Miniſters, according to God's Law; (as though no inſtance can be given of Ordination, without a Biſhop in Scripture or Antiquity; but all to the contrary) becauſe they ſtubbornly refuſe to ſubmit to our Laws and Conſtitutions, and contemn the lawful Authority under which God has plac'd them, and commanded them that they ſhould obey. And this is evident from the Statute of 14 *Car.* 2. In which there is a particular Proviſo, That all Miniſters of Foreign reform'd Churches, who come into this Kingdom by the King's Permiſſion, are to be excepted

* *The Church of* England *does not ſay abſolutely that all thoſe Miniſters who want Epiſcopal Ordination are no true Miniſters; but only that none ſhall be accounted a lawful Biſhop, Prieſt, or Deacon, ſo as to execute their Function in the Church of* England, *unleſs they be once Ordain'd by a Biſhop; as appears by the Preface to the Ordination.*

cepted out of, and excus'd from the Penalties of that Act. And this Custom of requiring Conformity, and Subscriptions from all who desire to be admitted to the Office of the Ministry, is agreeable to the Practice of every settled Church that has been ever since Christ's days; as will appear hereafter.

The 3d. Objection against the Constitution of our Church is, That our * National Church, which we call *The Church of* England, has no Foundation, and wants Discipline; All being incroach'd and swallow'd up in the Bishops; and the Pastors of every Parish, who ought to have full Power to execute every part of it, are depriv'd thereof.

* *By National Churches, are meant the whole Churches of such Nations as upon the decay of the* Roman *Empire resum'd their just Right of Government to themselves, both in Church and State.*

But this is false; for the Presbyters in our Church, have as great Power in Ecclesiastical Matters, as ever they had in the Primitive Church. What Power are they depriv'd of by the Bishops that they had then? By the Laws of our Church, no Rules of Discipline, no Articles of Doctrine, no Form of Worship can be introduc'd by the Bishops, or impos'd upon any, without the consent of the whole Presbytery of the Nation in Convocation, who appear either in Person or by Proxy.

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The only Authority that the Biſhops of the Church of *England* have above the Presbyters is, Government, Ordination, and Cenſures; which were all appropriated to the Apoſtles, and Biſhops in the Primitive Church: St. *Cyprian* aſſures us it was ſo in the *African* Church, in his Third Book, *Ep.* 10. & 12. 28. 27. And ſo it was in St. *Auguſtine*'s Time. See *Cod. Eccl. Afr.* c. 6, 7, 9, *&c.*

But, ſay they, the Power of Ordination is taken away from the Presbyters, and lodg'd ſolely in the Biſhops; and 'tis plain (ſay they) in the Apoſtles days the Presbyters did Ordain; for *Timothy* was ordain'd by laying on the hands of the Presbytery, 1 *Tim.* 4. 14. But Dr. *Hammond* in his Paraphraſe on this Text ſays, That theſe Presbyters here ſpoken of, who ordain'd *Timothy*, were Apoſtles: That *Timothy* was ordain'd by St. *Paul* is moſt evident; for St. *Paul* in his Second Epiſtle to *Timothy*, ch. 1. v. 6. ſays, *I put thee in mind, that thou ſtir up the gift of God which is in thee, by the laying on of my hands.* And the Apoſtles might then have been likely enough call'd *Presbyters*; for that during the Apoſtles time, Biſhops and Presbyters were the ſame, and ſometimes us'd the one for the other; as appears plainly by comparing

ring 1 *Tim.* 4. 14. with 2 *Tim.* 1. 6. In the former Verſe, St. *Paul* bids *Timothy Neglect not the gift that is in him, by laying on the hands of the Presbyters*; And in the latter, he bids him, *Stir up the gift of God which is in you, by the laying on of my hands.*

For while the Apoſtles liv'd, they manag'd the Affairs of Government in the Church themſelves, and therefore there were few or no Biſhops in their days; but as they withdrew, they committed the Care and Government of Churches to ſuch Perſons as they appointed thereto, of which we have an uncontroulable Evidence in *Timothy* and *Titus:* So that although the Apoſtles left no Succeſſors in *Eodem gradu*, as to thoſe things that were extraordinary in them, as the Infallibility of their Doctrine, and the writing New Goſpels, the Extent of their Power, *&c.* yet to other parts of their Apoſtolick Office, they had Succeſſors, as in Teaching and Governing, and ſuch like things that were not extraordinary. Which Power of Governing, Ordaining, *&c.* being given to ſuch particular Presbyters as the Apoſtles thought fit for it, was properly the Epiſcopal Power: And thus theſe who were but Presbyters in the Apoſtles days, by the acceſſion of this governing and ordaining Power, became Biſhops after

after their Deceaſe or Departure. And thus will all thoſe ſeeming Differences between the words *Presbyter* and *Biſhop*, ſpoken of in Antiquity, be reconcil'd. And herewith agrees the Opinion of Archbiſhop *Whitgift* and Biſhop *Bilſon*, and Dr. *Stillingfleet* in his *Miſchiefs of Separation*, p. 270. and many others. See King *Charles* I. his *Debates about Epiſcopacy*, more fully concerning this Matter.

But 'tis plain, that ſince the Apoſtles days, Presbyters were not Biſhops, but a diſtinct Order from them: And this is agreed by moſt Ancient and Modern Writers. See among others, *Ignatius* his Epiſtle *ad Trall.* where he ſays, That without Biſhops, Prieſts, and Deacons, it cannot be call'd a Church. And *Aerius* who declar'd, that there was no difference between a Biſhop and a Presbyter, was repreſented by *Epiphanius* as a Prodigy, and his opinion Madneſs. See *Epiph. Her.* 74. n. 1, 3. So *Iſchyrus* pretended to be a Presbyter, becauſe *Coluthus* had ordain'd him; but *Athanaſius* repreſents it as a Monſter, that one ſhou'd eſteem himſelf a Presbyter, who was ordain'd by one who died himſelf a Presbyter. See Dr. *Maur. Defence of Dioceſan Epiſcopacy*, p. 451. And in the Primitive Church, if a Biſhop himſelf did Ordain any

any one againſt the Canons and Eſtabliſh'd Diſcipline of the Church, they did not ſtick at declaring ſuch Ordination void, and in ſome Caſes to re-ordain. See *Can. Nicen.* 9, 10. 16. 19. and *Can. Antioch.* 73. 10, &c. What Sentence ſhall we think then they wou'd have pronounc'd againſt our *Presbyterian Ordination*, as practis'd here in *England*, contrary both to the Canons of the Church, and the Laws of the Land too.

But beſides all this, the Plea which our Diſſenters make for Separation upon this account, that the Presbyters are totally depriv'd of their Power of Ordaining, is falſe; For by the Canons of the Church of *England*, Four Presbyters are to aſſiſt the Biſhop in giving Orders, and after Examination, to joyn in laying on of hands on the Perſon ordain'd. See *Can.* 31. and 35.

But another Objection which they make to the Church of *England*, for want of Diſcipline is, for that the Power of Excommunicating Notorious Offenders, is taken away from the Parochial Miniſter, and lodg'd only in the Biſhop. But ſure they who make this Objection, never read the 26th. Canon, which is one of them acknowledg'd to be the Authentick Church Canons: For that Canon ſays expreſly, That no Miniſter ſhall admit any

any of his Flock to [illegible]d's Supper, who is known to be guilt[illegible] Scandalous Sin, until he hath open[illegible]d that he has truly repented. And [illegible]aſe the Offender continue obſtinate, he muſt give an account to the Ordnary within 14 Days, who is then to proceed to greater Excommunication, for the other is call'd a *Penitential Excommunication*. So then it ſeems the Paſtors are not totally depriv'd of the Power of cenſuring for Scandalous offences; nay, they have a greater and more abſolute Power, than is allow'd them in many other Reform'd Churches; for indeed, the exerciſe of Diſcipline is a Work of ſo much Prudence and Difficulty, that the greateſt Zealots for it, have not thought fit to truſt it in the Hands of every Parochial Miniſter, and his particular Congregation. *Calvin* himſelf ſays, to do ſo, is contrary to the Apoſtolick Practice. See *Calv. Ep.* 136. And *Beza*, ſpeaking of the Diſcipline of *Geneva*, in his *Ep.* 20. ſays, The Parochial Miniſters proceed no farther than Admonition, but in caſe of Contumacy, they certifie the Presbytery of the City, who ſit at certain times to hear all Cenſures relating to Diſcipline.

But allowing a Church wants true Diſcipline, does it therefore loſe its Being, or juſtifie

ſtify Separati[illegible]ure, if ſo, there were few [illegible]n Churches to be found in the [illegible], many of them having no Diſc[illegible]all among them for many years, nor ſo much as the Lord's Supper adminiſtred in ſome parts of this Kingdom for ten or a dozen years together.

But now we come to the 4th. Objection againſt the Conſtitution of our Church, which is, That the People are depriv'd of their right of chooſing their own Miniſters.

Pray let me ask them how this Original and inherent Right (as Mr. *Baxter* calls it) of chooſing their own Miniſters, came to be lodg'd in the People? Was there not a Church to be form'd in the beginning? Did not Chriſt appoint Apoſtles, and give them Authority for that end? Where was the Church Power then lodg'd? Was it not in the Apoſtles? Did not they in all places as they planted Churches, appoint Officers to teach and govern them? And were not then the Paſtors inveſted with a Power ſuperior to that of the People? How came they then to loſe it, or how came the People to pretend an original Right thereto? Beſides, How cou'd the People make choice of Men for their fitneſs and abilities, when at that time

their abilities depe[illegible] on the Apoſtles laying on o[illegible]nds, for then the Holy Ghoſt w[illegible] them. It ſeems then that thi[illegible]nd inherent Right was not in the People in the Apoſtles days, nor in the firſt Ages of the Church, for if it had, St. *Clement*, St. *Cyprian*, St. *Chryſoſtom*, &c. could not have been ignorant of it; St. *Clement* ſays in his *Ep.* 54, 55, 56, 57. (the Apoſtles thought fit to reſerve this Power of appointing Officers in the Church to themſelves, to prevent the Contentions that might happen about it: And that all the People had to do, was to give teſtimony of the Perſon choſen;) And to that end, 'tis true, the People were to be preſent at the nomination of a new Biſhop; for ſince, they were to be Men blameleſs and of good report; 'twas but fit that the People that beſt knew his Life and Converſation, ſhould be preſent to teſtify the ſame. And herewith agrees St. *Cyprian Ep.* 68. (whom Mr. *Baxter* vouches for the contrary) ſays he, (The Biſhop ſhou'd be choſen in the preſence of the People, that by their preſence their Faults may be publiſh'd, or their good Actions commended,) but ſays not a word of the Peoples

Power

Power of Electing him. As to the Elections of Deacons, 'tis to be noted that 'twas properly no Church Power which they had, but they were Stewards of the Common Stock; and therefore 'twas but reasonable the Community should be satisfied in the choice of them. St. *Chrysostom* in his Book *de Sacerdotio*, complains much of the unfitness of the People to judge in such matters. So does St. *Augustine Ep.* 110.

All our Ordinations must be done in the publick view of the People, who are demanded of the Bishop, whether any of them can or will except against the Persons to be admitted. See the Form of Ordination in the Book of Common Prayer.

And indeed, were there no other Reasons against the Peoples choosing their own Ministers, but the mischiefs that would necessarily attend it, 'twere sufficient; for whenever the People assum'd this Power of choosing, it caus'd so great Disturbances in the Church, that at *Antioch* the Divisions of the People about the choice of a Bishop, in the time of *Constantine*, had kindled such a Flame, as had almost destroy'd both Church and City. The like at *Rome* upon the choice of *Damascus*. And if the People have the Power of choosing their own Ministers, what shou'd hinder but there may be a Presbyterian, Independant, Anabaptist, Quaker and Papist teacher all in one Parish, and so this

would ſet open a door to infinite Diviſions.

And therefore to avoid the great Evils, and inconveniences of popular Elections, the Power of chooſing their own Miniſters was taken away from the People by ſeveral Councils, as 12. *and* 13. *Can. Conc. Laodicea, Conc. Antioch. c.* 18. &c. *Conc.* 2*d. of Nice. c.* 3.

The Reaſon that firſt gave Lay-men a title to the nomination of Miniſters, was when Chriſtian Princes and others, had given large Endowments to the Church, 'twas thought but juſt that they ſhould have the nomination of the Miniſters for thoſe Churches that they had built and indow'd. And this was a Prerogative in the Kings of *England* ever ſince the firſt foundation of a Chriſtian Church here, and long before any freedom of Elections was pretended to. See *Stat.* 25. *Edw.* 3. and the Caſe of the King's Eccleſiaſtical Power in Lord *Cook*'s 8*th. Rep.* and the Caſe of *Præmunire* in Sir *John Davenant*'s *Reports*, Caſe *ult.* And this title of Patronage has been confirmed to Laymen by ſeveral Councils, as 1*ſt. Coun.* of *Orange, Anno Dom.* 441. 2*d. Counc.* of *Arles, Anno* 452. 9*th. Counc.* of *Toledo*, &c.

And

And this Right of preſentation is not only us'd in *England*, but in other reform'd Churches: In *Denmark* the Archbiſhops, and Biſhops are appointed by the King, ſo they are in *Swedeland*. So in other *Lutheran* Churches, the Superintendants are appointed by the ſeveral Princes, and the Patrons preſent before Ordination. The Synod of *Dort* hath a *Salvo* for the right of Patronage. In *France*, the Miniſters are choſen by Miniſters; at *Geneva* by the Council of State; who have Power likewiſe to depoſe them. And *Beza* in his *Ep.* 83. declares againſt the Peoples chooſing their Miniſters as a thing without any ground in Scripture. *Grotius Ep. ad Boatſlaer Ep.* 62. *p.* 21. agrees herein. How comes then our *Engliſh* Diſſenters to make this a ground of Separation, to wit, The depriving the People of their Right of chooſing their own Miniſters, when 'tis evident they never had any ſuch Right, but when they got it by Uſurpation: And 'tis contrary to the general practice of the Church in all Ages, and even to the practice of other reform'd Churches at this day.

But beſides the unwarrantableneſs of the Peoples chooſing their Miniſters, and the great miſchiefs that attend it, by making the

People run into Diviſions and Factions; 'tis a thing very unreaſonable in it ſelf that ſuch an ignorant, proud, unpeaceable ſort of People, as Mr. *Baxter* himſelf confeſſes in his *Sacrilegia Diſſert. p.* 102. *&c.* the ordinary ſort of Chriſtians to be, ſhould be made judges of their Miniſters abilities, and ſoundneſs of Doctrines; who are moſt apt to revile the beſt and graveſt Miniſters, as the ſame Mr. *Baxter* ſays himſelf in his *Cure of Diviſ. p.* 393. Sure 'tis more likely that the King and Parliament and the Governours of the Church ſhou'd provide able and fit Miniſters for us, than ſuch ſort of People as theſe; unleſs any will be ſo ridiculous as to ſuppoſe that the Magiſtrates, and Clergy are all bad men, and the ignorant common People the only incouragers of Vertue.

They may ſay 'tis as unreaſonable on the other hand, that all the People of a Pariſh ſhou'd be oblig'd to take a Miniſter put into the Cure by ſome young, raw, extravagant Heir that had the good Fortune to be born to an Eſtate, to which the Advowſon did belong, but perhaps is as ignorant, and unfit to judge of the abilities of a Miniſter as the meaneſt in the Pariſh. To this I anſwer, That though ſuch ignorant Perſons

may

may ſometimes have the right of Preſentation, yet they have not the Power of putting into the Cure any Miniſter they pleaſe, for the Patron has only the right of preſenting his Clerk, who muſt be admitted and inſtituted by the Biſhop, before the Cure is ſaid to be full, and if the Biſhop with the reſt of his Clergy, after examination had, *&c.* do think him any way unqualified for the Cure of Souls, he may reject him, and put the Patron to preſent another qualify'd for the Office; which if he neglect to do within ſix Months from the time the Church became void, he ſhall loſe his preſentation for that turn, and the Biſhop ſhall preſent. So that the Patron, it ſeems cannot put whom he will on the People for their Paſtor, but is bound to find *Perſonam idoneam*, a fit Perſon.

And now before we paſs from this matter, let us ſee whether the Civil Magiſtrate has Power to ſilence Miniſters or not. Doubtleſs he has, otherwiſe 'tis impoſſible that any Kingdom ſhould be ſafe; for ſince the generality of the People are ſo apt to be led by their Spiritual Guides, and take their Notions of Loyalty and Obedience from them, 'tis ſtrange to imagine that Miniſters ſhall be allow'd to Preach up Sedi-

tion, Hereſy, or what Doctrine they pleaſe, and it ſhall not be in the Power of the Magiſtrate to ſilence them.

But ſay our Diſſenters, we are call'd to the Office of the Miniſtry by God Almighty, and have received our Commiſſion to Preach the Goſpel from him; and therefore muſt not neglect to diſcharge our Duty in Obedience to any Power upon Earth, for we muſt obey God rather than man.

But firſt, I hope they will grant that when God Almighty gave them this Commiſſion, he did not limit it to any certain place, but 'twas general to Preach the Word to all Nations, ſo that in obedience to God's Command, doubtleſs they ought to go and Preach in thoſe Countries where their Preaching is moſt wanted, and will do God moſt ſervice. There are many Countries in the World that know nothing of Chriſtianity, and many that do, have not able Miniſters enough to ſerve their turn; ſure theſe Men that think themſelves bound in Conſcience to Preach, wou'd much better diſcharge their Conſciences by going into thoſe Countries, and Preaching to thoſe poor People that are in ſo great want of it. Chriſt ſent his Diſciples to Preach to the loſt Sheep of the Houſe of *Iſrael*. The Apoſtles who doubtleſs had as univerſal a Commiſſion

miſſion to Preach, they never went to abide in thoſe Cities or Places where ſound Teachers were ſettled before, but they choſe to go into thoſe parts where Chriſtianity was leaſt known, and their Preaching would do moſt good. Why will not our Non-conformiſt Miniſters follow their example? Several of our foreign Plantations want able Miniſters among them, they want Univerſities and famous Schools to breed them in, and therefore muſt needs be but poorly ſupplied. If they would leave this Nation, and go and Preach there, 'twould convince the World that they deſign'd nothing but God's Glory and the diſcharge of their own Conſciences in deſiring to Preach; but ſince they do not, 'tis evident whatever their pretences may be, that 'tis ſelf-intereſt and their own conveniency, that makes them deſire the liberty of Preaching in theſe Nations.

What have they to ſay to this? Indeed the beſt of them give but a very unſatisfactory Anſwer hereto. Mr. *Baxter* in his Anſwer to Dr. *Stillingfleet*, ſays, The Reaſon why they do not go to Preach among the *Indians* is, becauſe they cannot ſpeak their Language, and becauſe many of them have Wives and Families which they cannot leave: But for his own part, he ſays, if he were

but

but young enough, he would not trouble this cenſorious perſecuting part of the World any longer: Mr. *Baxter* has not been always old, he was young enough when firſt he began to write againſt the Church of *England*, Why did he not go when firſt he was prohibited to Preach here, if he had, perhaps our Diviſions about Matters of Religion, had been much narrower than now they are, and a reconciliation much more eaſy between us. As for their not ſpeaking the Language, there are many of the New Plantations in *America*, &c. that underſtand *Engliſh* and *Latin*, and want able diligent Paſtors among them. And as to all their other Reaſons for not going, the leaving their Families, *&c.* they may carry them with them; but ſurely no Reaſons of this kind, can come in competition with the great Advantage of propagating the Goſpel of Chriſt, and the Peace and Quiet of three Kingdoms.

But again; They ſay God has commanded them to preach the Goſpel, and they muſt obey God rather than Man. So God has alſo commanded them to obey their Governours and Magiſtrates, and to preſerve the Peace and Unity of the Church and Nation in which they live. Now ſince they muſt

of

of neceſſity break one of theſe Commands by ſtaying at home and preaching in ſeparate Meetings; and may perform both by going to preach beyond Seas, certainly the beſt and ſafeſt way muſt be to doe the latter.

And if God Almighty has given them commiſſion to preach, as they ſay, I am ſure he has given them commiſſion no where to diſturb the Peace and Settlement of a Chriſtian Church and State, eſpecially a true Church. He bid them go and preach the Word, and teach all Nations, but we all know that the greateſt Part of the World was then unconverted, and had no Chriſtian Teachers and Miniſters orderly ſettled among them; ſo that thoſe whom Chriſt then ſent could have come no where amiſs, every one of them was to make as many Converts as he could, there being no limits put how far their particular Charge ſhould extend, and no farther; but ſoon after, even in the Apoſtles days, when particular diſtinct Churches were gather'd, and committed to the Care of particular Perſons, I ſuppoſe, none of our Diſſenters will ſay, That any Miniſters, by virtue of their general Commiſſion, to teach all Nations, might have come into another Paſtor's Congregation or Pariſh and preach in

in a ſeparate Meeting without Licence, and draw as many People from their lawful Paſtour, to whoſe Care they were particularly committed, as they could. No, they who did ſo were often condemn'd by St. *Paul*, as appears in many of his *Epiſtles*. And this is the very Caſe of the Church of *England*, with relation to our preſent *Diſſenters*; Allowing their Commiſſion to preach be as full as they pretend to, yet it gives them no Authority to invade other mens Rights, or to draw away the People from their lawful Miniſters; And eſpecially ſince, if they pleaſe, they may exerciſe their Office in other places, and do no Man wrong.

The Apoſtles had as full a Commiſſion to preach as any of our *Diſſenters* can pretend to, and ſomething more extraordinary; and yet we don't find that they thought themſelves oblig'd to preach directly in oppoſition to the civil Magiſtrate though a Heathen. 'Tis true, for the firſt 300 years Chriſtianity had not generally the Laws to countenance and defend it, as now it has. So that the Apoſtles and Fathers of the Church could not have the Command or Authority of the civil Magiſtrate for what they did, yet they had his connivance, and never preached directly in oppoſition to his poſitive command.

St.

St. *Paul* ſays, *Acts* 14. 12. *They neither found me in the Temple diſputing with any man, neither raiſing up the people, neither in the Synagogues, nor in the City.* And again, *Acts* 15. 8. *Neither againſt the Law of the Jews, neither againſt the Temple, nor yet againſt Cæſar, have I offended any thing at all.* So it ſeems the practice of the Apoſtles was to preach the Goſpel where they came ſo long as they were tolerated or conniv'd at by the Government. But as ſoon as they were prohibited by the Magiſtrate, they left that City or Place and went to the next, but thought it no ways their Duty to oppoſe the Will of their lawful Prince, though a Heathen. And will not our *Diſſenters* ſhew the ſame reſpect to a Chriſtian Prince that the Apoſtles did to Heathen Magiſtrates?

But whether Chriſtian Magiſtrates have power to ſilence ſome Miniſters, ſuch as they think fit, or not, it is a thing queſtionleſs that has been practis'd by 'em in all Ages, ever ſince the time of *Conſtantine* the Great, which is near 1400 years. *Conſtantine* by his Edict ſuppreſs'd all ſeparate Meetings, and among the reſt the *Novatians*, and ſilenc'd their Preachers, though their Ordination was as good as any among our *Nonconformiſts*. See *Euſebius Vita Conſt.* lib. 3. cap.

cap. 63, 64, 65, 66. And St. *Auguſtine* did very much commend the Emperour for ſo doing. See *Aug. Ep.* 48. and ſee alſo his 4th Book againſt *Creſconius* a *Donatiſt*, ch. 51.

All the Reform'd Churches in the World do, at this day, ſilence ſuch Miniſters as refuſe to ſubmit to the Orders and Government of their Church, and believe they have Power ſo to do. At *Geneva* their Council of State has the ſole Power of Electing and Depoſing Miniſters. Nay, farther, by the Conſtitution of *Geneva*, they have Power not only to ſilence, but to excommunicate ſuch Miniſters as ſhall contemn the Authority of the Church, or by their obſtinacy diſturb the Order of it. In the *French* Church, if any refuſe to ſubſcribe to the Orders of their Church, he is to be declared a Schiſmatick. And *Calvin* himſelf, *Ep. Olevian.* pag. 311, and 122. ſays, Let him that will not ſubmit to the Orders of a Society, be caſt out.

But what need we go ſo far from home for Inſtances of this kind? Let us ſee what the Opinion of our own *Diſſenters* heretofore was in this matter. Firſt then in the great Diſpute between the *Browniſts* and the *Non-conformiſts* about the Miniſters preaching, *&c.* againſt the Will of the Prince, the *Non-conformiſts* all agreed, That the Apoſtles had

Power

Power immediately from God to ſet up his Kingdom, but their Power was extraordinary, and under Heathen Magiſtrates. But our Miniſters have no ſuch extraordinary Power; And our Magiſtrates being Chriſtian are much more to be reſpected. See *Gifford*, a Non-conformiſt Miniſter his Anſwer to *Barrow*: And ſee the Confutation of the *Browniſts*, by ſeveral Non-conformiſts, who join'd together for that purpoſe; publiſh'd by one *Rathband* by their command, *p.* 51. And ſee Mr. *Bradſhaw* his Anſwer to *Johnſon*, to the ſame purpoſe; where he ſays, That the Magiſtrate had no Power to ſilence the Apoſtles, for that 'twas manifeſt by the ſilencing of them, was intended the utter extirpation of Chriſtianity: But the caſe is alter'd among us, for the intent of a Chriſtian Magiſtrate is not to ſilence all Chriſtian Miniſters but ſome particular men only; ſo that the Queſtion is not whether Miniſter or no? but whether this or that Miniſter of Chriſt? And doubtleſs every Chriſtian Prince has Power to chuſe what Men he thinks fitteſt for publick Offices in Church or State, ſo long as they be equally qualified according to God's Law.

But to go on, The Opinion and Practice of the *Diſſenters* in the late unhappy Times,

are

are not yet forgotten, they were all then of an opinion that Christ's Ministers may be silenc'd and accordingly put it in practice every Party as it serv'd their turn: See their *Solemn League* and *Covenant*, all who would not enter into it, and solemnly swear to doe their utmost endeavour to abolish Episcopacy and set up Presbytery, were immediately not only silenc'd but sequester'd; though their Ministry was as much of Divine Right as any of theirs now. Conscience then was no Plea for not taking this solemn Oath. They would not suffer one of the old Clergy to teach a School. Nay, they would not allow their own *Independent* Brethren to preach, though they had all taken *Presbyterian* Orders, as they themselves. See the Letter from the *Presbyterian* Ministers of *London*, to the Assembly of Divines at *Westminster*, *Ann.* 1645. *Jan.* 1. And the grand Debate, *&c.* And in *New-England* where the *Independents* have the Power they are all of the same Mind, none is to preach publickly, by their Laws, where any two organick Churches, Council of State, or general Court, shall declare their dissatisfaction thereat. See their Body of Statutes which they have lately printed. Nay, they are not satisfied to silence such Ministers as will not conform, but they banish them too,

too, as they did Mr. *Williams* and others.

And is it not very ſtrange then that the ſilencing of ſuch Miniſters by the King and Governours of the Church, who poſitively refuſe to ſubmit to the Orders of the Church, or to give their Governours ſuch a Teſt of their Obedience and Conformity to the Laws of the Church and State, as they in their Diſcretion have thought fit to require of them; that this ſhould be a thing ſo unlawful and wicked now, that has been practiſed in the pureſt Ages of the Church, and by the Diſſenters themſelves when they were in Power, and by all the Churches in the World at this day.

And indeed if the Teſts which the Laws require of their Obedience and Loyalty be too ſevere and rigid, they may blame themſelves for it; for Governours cannot be too cautious in ſecuring the Peace and Safety of the Kingdom againſt a Faction that has once already overthrown this Monarchy, and Church. And give us all the Reaſon in the World to believe, That they are ready to do the ſame again (eſpecially the latter) as ſoon as ever it is in their Power. The bitter Spirit they ſhow in *Scotland* already, and their Unchriſtian like behaviour to all thoſe that differ from them in Opinion,

ſhews us plainly what we may expect here when ever they are able.

And thus much for the Pleas which the Diſſenters uſe for Separation, which relate to the Conſtitution of our Church. The ſecond ſort are againſt the terms of Communion with it. They ſay our terms of Communion are unlawful, for that the Church of *England* injoins ſome things in God's Worſhip which are not expreſly commanded in Scripture, and ſo makes the Scriptures inſufficient. And theſe things are our Ceremonies, and preſcribed Forms of Prayer, *&c.*

Firſt, as to our Ceremonies. The Church of *England* uſes no Ceremonies, but ſuch as were us'd in the pureſt Ages of the Church, as Dr. *Stillingfleet* has prov'd in his *Miſchiefs of Separation:* And ſuch as are now us'd by the greateſt part of the Reform'd Churches beyond Seas. The *Lutheran* Churches have the ſame, and more Ceremonies than we have: And yet theſe Churches have been thought fit to be united to the beſt Reform'd Churches by the beſt and wiſeſt Proteſtants, as appears by a Synod of the Reform'd Churches at *Charetон* in *France*, *Anno* 1631.

And indeed, there is no Chriſtian Church in the World, but what do make Laws, and Canons in Matters of Circumſtance, and com-

compel both Miniſters and People to obey the ſame. They do not believe that every variation in Circumſtance, in God's Worſhip is ſetting up new parts of Worſhip as our Diſſenters ſeem to do when they charge us with ſetting up new parts of Worſhip, and making the Scriptures inſufficient. Adoration, we all agree, is a ſubſtantial and proper act of Divine Worſhip, but whether this Adoration is perform'd by proſtration, or by bowing, or by kneeling, is a Circumſtance in it ſelf indifferent; And therefore they who differ in theſe Circumſtances, do not differ in the act of Worſhip, but in the manner. See the *Harmony of Confeſſions*, where you will find what the Opinions of other Reformed Churches are concerning the Lawfulneſs and Uſefulneſs of Ceremonies: The latter *Helvetian* Confeſſion ſaith, *That there are different Rites and Ceremonies found in the Churches; let no Man judge hereby that the Churches diſſent.* And the Confeſſion of *Bohemia* hath, *Wherefore thoſe Rites and thoſe good Ceremonies ought only to be kept, which among the People of Chriſt do Edifie; therefore whether they be extent, or brought in by the Biſhops, or by the Councils Eccleſiaſtical, or by other Authors whatſoever, the ſimpler*

ſort are not to trouble themſelves about that, but muſt uſe them to that which is good. And a little after, *Although our Men do not equally obſerve all Ceremonies with other Churches, which is not a thing neceſſary to be done, yet are they not ſo minded as to move any Diſſentions for the cauſe of Ceremonies, although they be not judged to be altogether neceſſary, ſo that they be not found contrary to God's Word.* And the *Auguſtine* Confeſſion has; *Some Men then may ask, whether we would have this life of Man to be without Order, without Ceremonies? In no wiſe: But we teach, That the true Paſtors in their Churches may Ordain Publick Rites or Ceremonies.* And *Beza* in his 24th. *Epiſt.* agrees herein, as has been ſaid before. And *Calvin* in his Book of the *True way of Reformation*, Ch. 16. ſays, He would not contend about Ceremonies, not only thoſe which are for decency, but thoſe which are Symbolical. *Let all things be done decently and in order*, ſays the Scripture. And St. *Paul* tell us, 1 *Cor.* 14.33. *God is not the author of confuſion but of peace, as in all the Churches of the Saints.*

But to come home to our Diſſenters, Mr. *Baxter* in his *Poor Man's Family Book*, *p.* 337. ſpeaking of our publick Worſhip in our

our Pariſh Churches, ſays, *In all the lawful Orders, Geſtures, and Manners of behaviour in God's Worſhip, affect not to differ from the reſt, but conform your ſelf to the uſe of the Church, for in the Church ſingularity is a Diſcord*, &c. See *Vines* on the Sacrament to the ſame purpoſe, *p.* 39. and many more Inſtances of this kind might be given, but what has been ſaid is ſufficient to ſhew that ſuch Ceremonies as ſerve for Order, or Edification, and are not directly contrary to God's Law, are to be uſed according to the Opinion of all the Reformed Churches, and moſt Eminent Men both at home and abroad.

Now, How ſhall we know what Ceremonies are lawful, and what not? It is to be noted, That the nature of Ceremonies is to be taken from the Doctrine which goes along with it, and may be lawful and not lawful, as that is. If a Ceremony be made a ſubſtantial part of God's Worſhip, and unalterable; or be ſuppos'd ſo neceſſary, as that the doing of it would be a thing meritorious or pleaſing to God, and the not doing of it ſinful, tho' there were no human Law which requir'd the doing of it; Then it becomes ſinful, becauſe it makes the Scriptures inſufficient. And this it was that

made the Jewiſh Ceremony of waſhing before Meat ſinful: And ſo it is in many of the Ceremonies of the Church of *Rome*. But when Ceremonies are injoin'd for the ſake of Order and Uniformity in God's Worſhip, according to the general Rules of the Scripture, and to prevent the great Miſchiefs which we ſhould inevitably fall into, if every Paſtor and People were ſuffered to follow their ſeveral different judgments in the manner of God's Worſhip, then they are lawful and good.

But, ſay they, If theſe Ceremonies do not bind the Conſciences of Men, Why does the Diſcipline and Cenſures of the Church, force Men to uſe them? I anſwer, The Church does not oblige Men to the obſervance of theſe Ceremonies, as things that bind the Conſcience, or which are neceſſary to be done or not done in themſelves; but the Reaſon why Men are forced to obſerve them, and puniſh'd if they refuſe, is becauſe they are appointed by the Church, and diſobedience to the Laws of Church or State, made not contrary to the Law of God, is ſinful, *Rom.* 13. 5. and 2. And for this they are puniſh'd, and alſo for diſturbing the publick Peace. And thus we juſtify our bowing at the name of *Jeſus* at ſeaſonable

times,

times, and all our Ceremonies; ſince the Church has appointed them, we ought to obey, unleſs we can prove them to be ſinful, which no Man can do, ſo long as the Worſhip is directed to a true Object, to wit, the Perſon of Chriſt. As for the Ceremony of Bowing towards the Altar, Note the Canon that appointed it, did not oblige any to the obſervance of it, but left them to their liberty.

As to the poſture appointed by the Church of *England*, for receiving the Lord's Supper, to wit, Kneeling, 'Tis a Circumſtance which may be varied according to the Diſcretion of the Church. In the Primitive Church it was always taken in the poſture of Adoration, which poſture varied according to the Cuſtoms of Countries. Now Kneeling being the poſture of Adoration in theſe Kingdoms, the Church of *England* has therefore appointed, that it be taken kneeling. And indeed, 'tis but very reaſonable that ſo Sacred an Ordinance, and ſo great a Benefit, ſhould be received in the moſt thankful and humble poſture that may be, and that ſurely is on our Knees; which is alſo the fitteſt poſture for thoſe high ſtrains of Devotion, with which ſo Sacred a Work ought to be attended at the very inſtant of taking it.

The only Objection that I know is made

againſt this poſture of Kneeling at the Sacrament, is becauſe it is Idolatrous and contrary to Chriſt's own Practice. 'Tis ſtrange that they will make us and the greateſt part of the Reform'd Churches all Idolaters whether we will or no: Does not our Book of *Common Prayer* at the end of the Communion Service tell them as plain as words can expreſs it, That we pay no Adoration to any thing in the Sacrament, but Chriſt himſelf which is in Heaven, and yet will they make us Idolaters for all this? Has any of them ever writ ſo ſtrong againſt Idolizing the Elements of Bread and Wine in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, as our Divines of the Church of *England* have done? And yet will they perſwade us we are Idolaters? They may as well believe, that we Worſhip the Stones in the Church-Walls, when we kneel down to Pray in them: And truly, I fear many of them do ſo; which makes them uſe that poſture ſo ſeldom in their publick Meetings: For you ſhall ſeldom ſee in any of their Meetings, ſcarce one of the whole Congregation on their Knees, not even at repeating the Lord's Prayer, if it happen to be ſaid, which is not often. Their uſual poſtures of Praying in their publick Congregations, are either ſtanding,

ing, or lolling on their Elbows: And at the Reading of the Holy Scriptures; nay, even of the Pſalms themſelves, tho' they are the very higheſt ſtrains of Devotion, you ſhall ſee them all ſitting on their Breeches, and many of them with their Hats on.

But pray, How comes the poſture of ſitting to be the only fit poſture for receiving the Lord's Supper? Was that the poſture Chriſt us'd? No, if we will believe moſt learned Men, they will tell us, Chriſt gave it leaning; which perhaps, he might have done on purpoſe, to let us ſee, that he did not require any one ſet poſture, for leaning is a mean as it were, between kneeling and ſtanding, and ſeems to incline equally to both. Why do they not take it leaning as Chriſt did, and after Supper, and in an upper Room? Why do they not obſerve all theſe Circumſtances? If one may be diſpens'd with without ſin, Why not another? If they will not be ſo civil as to Conform to the Church of *England*, Why will they not follow the Example of other Reformed Churches? the Churches of *France* and moſt of the Reformed Churches, take it either ſtanding or kneeling, as being poſtures of Adoration: But becauſe they do, our *Engliſh* Diſſenters will take it in no other poſture,

posture, but that which is most irreverent, and fartheſt from Adoration in the World; to wit, ſitting on their Breeches. 'Tis a Feaſt (ſay they) and therefore ſitting being a poſture of eaſe, is moſt ſuitable to it: We own 'tis a Feaſt, but not a common, but Spiritual Feaſt; and therefore we ought to take it not in the poſture we uſe at our common Tables, but in a more decent and reverent Poſture.

To conclude this Point, I ſhall give you the words of one of the moſt Eminent of the Non-conformiſt Preachers in this Matter. *Vines*, in his Book on the Sacrament, *p.* 39. ſays, *'Tis no corruption to vary in occaſional Circumſtances in adminiſtring the Lord's Supper, ſuch as time and place, and poſture*, &c. Mr. *Baxter* has ſeveral times declar'd the ſame, and ſo has moſt of the Non-conformiſt Miniſters. And herewith agrees *Hooker* in his *Eccleſ. Polity*, lib. 5. p. 366.

As to the Sign of the Croſs in Baptiſm, 'Tis us'd only as a Solemn Rite or Ceremony of admiſſion into the Church of *England*, as 'tis uſual in admiſſions into Societies to uſe ſome particular Ceremonies: Therefore as Baptiſm, beſides its Sacramental Efficacy, is a Rite of admiſſion into Chriſt's Catholick Church, ſo the Sign of the Croſs, is into our Church of *England*. We do not

uſe

uſe it as 'tis uſed in the Church of *Rome*; for they uſe it as a dedicative Sign to God, we only as a Token, or declarative Sign to Men; they uſe it before Baptiſm, and make it part of it; we after, and make it no part of Baptiſm, but allow the Baptiſm to be good without it; and it to be omitted in Private Baptiſm, if it be ſcrupled.

If it be ſaid, that ſince theſe Ceremonies are allowed to be things indifferent in themſelves by the Church of *England*, and are ſcrupled by the Diſſenters, why will the Church of *England* impoſe them? I anſwer, Firſt, 'tis not fit nor convenient that ſuch things as are thought neceſſary by the Governours of a Church, to preſerve the Order and Unity of it, ſhould be caſt aſide, to humour ſome over ſcrupulous and reſtleſs Minds, and who, 'tis like, would not be ſatisfied, were that granted. Secondly, It is more ſafe for the Church of *England* to follow the Example of the greateſt part of the Reformed Churches, which do allow and practiſe them, than ſuch a handful of People as the *Diſſenters* of *England*, &c. And Thirdly, There were as inſignificant Ceremonies injoyn'd by the Apoſtles themſelves, as any of ours are now, notwithſtanding ſome Men's ſcruples concerning them; as the

the *Love Feaſts*, and *Holy Kiſs*, &c. till aboliſh'd by general conſent. And the Aſſembly of their own Divines at *Weſtminſter*, tell us, *The Apoſtles* (ſay they) *notwithſtanding the difference of Men's Judgments, did preſcribe Rules of Uniformity.* See Papers for Accomodation, *p.* 111.

The next great Objection which the *Diſſenters* make to the terms of our Communion is, For that we tie up our Miniſters to preſcribed Forms of Prayer, which is a ſtinting of the Spirit, and hinders them from exerciſing their Gifts, and is contrary to Scripture, and the practice of the Primitive Church.

The Arguments which they commonly uſe againſt written Forms of Prayer are, Firſt, They ſay that nothing but the Canonical Scripture, and the lively Voice of God's Graces (which they call Preaching and Extempore Prayer) are to be brought into the Publick Worſhip of God; and nothing that is Humane, becauſe ſubject to Infirmities and Errors. But if ſo, then muſt we exclude not only all written Prayers, but the whole Bible too, unleſs in the Original Tongue; for all Tranſlations of it are Humane, and ſubject to Errors. And alſo the Prayers and Preaching of the Paſtors muſt

muſt be excluded, for the Errors in the Sermons; and Prayers of the Paſtors, cannot be ſaid to be the lively Voices of God's own Graces. And the Pſalms in Metre muſt be alſo excluded.

Another Argument is, That we muſt not make uſe of any outward helps in the action of Prayer; for the Spirit they ſay helpeth our Infirmities, and therefore written Forms, and all other outward helps are ſinful. But let me ask them, whether the Voice of another that Prayeth, or Faſting, or the lifting up of the Hands and Eyes, 1 *Tim.* 2. 8. or Kneeling, be Prayer it ſelf, or only outward helps to Prayer to make it more fervent? Sure they are outward helps only; and yet they are uſed in the very action of Prayer.

Again, they ſay Reading a Prayer cannot be Praying; for Prayer is the pouring forth Supplications to God, the other a receiving in of ſuch things as we Read. But when one hears a Prayer pronounced by another, his hearing does receive it into his Soul; but yet at the ſame inſtant he doth power it forth as a Prayer to God. Why then may not this be done as well when 'tis read as when 'tis pronounced by another?

But

But then they tell us, That all Forms of Prayer are a ſtinting of the Spirit. If ſo, Why will they hear the Extempore Prayer of another Man? is not this as much a Form of Prayer to all the Hearers, as any written Form can be? Doubtleſs it is. How comes it then, that the Spirit of the Hearers is not as much ſtinted when they joyn in this Form, as if they had joyn'd in a written Form?

But ſince our *Diſſenters* have the confidence to affirm, That Forms of Prayer are ſinful; and were never uſed among Chriſtians till lately, in the time of Popery and Superſtition, and are ſupported only by the Ignorance and Lazyneſs of our Clergy, I will ſhew, That Forms of Prayer and Praiſes have been uſed by God's People in the time of the *Old Teſtament*, and have been practiſed and recommended by Chriſt himſelf in the *New*: And that both Forms of Prayer and Liturgies, were Compoſed by the Fathers, and appointed to be uſed in the Church ever ſince Chriſt's days: And that even the moſt Eminent of our own *Non-Conformiſts* have heretofore declared their liking thereto: And that all the Reformed Churches do uſe and approve of preſcribed Forms in their publick Worſhip at this Day: And laſtly, I will ſhew, That our *Engliſh*

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Common-Prayer Book has been particularly Commended and Approved by the moſt Learned and Eminent Men of the Reformed Churches beyond Seas. And when this is done, if any will be ſo hardy, as to affirm, That Forms of Prayer are ſo Sinful, as to cauſe a neceſſity of Separation, he is incorrigible, and not to be Convinced by Reaſons.

Firſt then, Forms of Prayer, *&c.* were uſed by God's People in the time of the *Old Teſtament*; for the Lord preſcribed a Form of Bleſſing to *Aaron*, ſaying, *On this wiſe ye ſhall bleſs the Children of Iſrael, ſaying*, &c. *Numb.* vi. 23. And again, *Deut.* xxvi. he preſcribed a Form of Prayer, which he commanded the People to uſe. And the xxij. *Pſalm* is a Prayer, which the People were commanded to ſing or ſay, every Morning; ſo are ſeveral of the other *Pſalms* Forms of Prayers, as lxxxvi, xc, cij, *&c.* See *Origen Cint. Celſ. l.* 4. *p.* 178. And here obſerve, That the *Diſſenters* will allow theſe *Pſalms* to be Prayers, and that they ought to be Sung to God; yet they will not allow that a Man ſhould Pray Singing. For, ſay they, When they are Sung, they are not Prayer. See now what an abſurdity they will run into, rather than forſake their own

Opinion:

Opinion: For here they affirm, That a Man may ſay the Words of Prayer to God devoutly, and yet not pray.

Secondly, Chriſt himſelf uſed a Form of Prayer (though doubtleſs he had a power of praying Extempore, much beyond what our Diſſenters, or any that ever was on Earth, can pretend to) when he was in the Garden, a little before his Suffering, he prayed twice or thrice in the ſame Words, *Matth.* xxvi. 44. *Mark* xiv. 39. and that too at a time when he was in ſo great Extremity and Sorrow, That he ſweated drops of Blood; and at ſuch a time one uſually prays after the moſt prevailing and fervent manner.

And to aſſure us that our Saviour thought Forms of Prayer very neceſſary to help our Infirmities, we have not only his Example, but his Precept for it too. For our Saviour taught his Diſciples a Form of Prayer, *Matth.* vi. 9. and bid them uſe it. And the occaſion of our Saviour's giving his Diſciples this Form of Prayer was to obviate the inconveniencies which he ſaw did uſually attend Extempore Prayers; to wit, the uſing Vain Repetitions, *&c.* which he tells them are not pleaſing to God; and therefore he firſt bids them beware of that, and then immediately after he gives them a ſhort and

perfect

perfect Form of Prayer, as the best way to prevent that evil. Whether our Dissenters have not as much reason to use Forms of Prayer for that very reason as Christ's Disciples had, let the World judge that hears their tedious *ex tempore* Prayers fill'd with as many vain Repetitions, and bald, and sometimes senseless Expressions as any of theirs.

But say the Dissenters, When our Saviour taught his Disciples to pray, he did not design that they should use any certain Form of Prayer. For he bad them, *Luke* 11. 2. *When ye pray, say thus*; and (*thus*) being an adverb of Similitude, does shew that our Saviour did not intend they should use the same words, but some other such like. To this I answer, In the 3d. *chap.* of *Exod. v.* 14, 15. *The Lord said unto Moses, thus shalt thou say to the Children of Israel, EHEIE hath sent me unto you. And again, the God of your Fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob hath sent me unto you.* Here *Moses* (by this Rule) must not say these words, *not EHEIE hath sent me unto you*; not *the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob hath sent me unto you*, but the like. And by the same reason the Scripture is not the very Word of God, but the Words of the Prophets; for all along,

when the Prophet ſays, *Thus ſaith the Lord*, they do not tell the very Words of God, but the like.

From what has been ſaid, 'tis evident that we have Scripture on our ſide, both Old and New Teſtament, for uſing preſcribed Forms of Prayer. We will in the next place enquire what Authority we have for it in the firſt and pureſt Ages of the Church. Firſt then, That Forms of Prayer were us'd in the Church in the firſt Century, I gather from *Ignatius* who was Biſhop of *Antioch*, *Anno Dom.* 99. in his *Epiſt.* to thoſe at *Magneſia*, he bids 'em, *Do nothing without the Biſhop and Presbyters, nor to make tryal of things agreeable to their own private Fancy*, p. 34. And *Socrates* in his Hiſtory, *l.* 6. *c.* 8. ſays, *That* Ignatius *firſt brought the uſage of ſinging alternately* (as we uſe in our Choirs) *into the Church of* Antioch. *Photius* affirms the ſame of him. And *Theodoret* ſays, *Hiſt. lib.* 2. *c.* 24. *That this Cuſtom of ſinging alternately, began at* Antioch, *and was ſoon received all the World over.*

In the ſecond Century, *Tertull. de Orat. c.* 1. *and c.* 9. tells us, They us'd Forms of Prayer then in the *African* Church. He calls the Lord's Prayer, *the lawful and ordinary Prayer*, and that the Chriſtians daily repeated

peated that very Form. And he ſhews they ſang Hymns, *&c.* then in the Church alternately as we do now, *Tertull. ad Uxor. l.* 2. *p.* 172.

And *Calvin* in his *Inſtit. l.* 4. *c.* 1. affirms the ſame, That the Chriſtians did uſe to repeat the Lord's Prayer daily, and that they did it by Chriſt's Command. How will our Diſſenters reconcile this to their ſeldom or never uſing of it, even on the Lord's Day; every young Preacher, yea, and every perhaps drunken Cobler, preferring their own raſh and indeliberate Prayers before it.

In the third Century, St. *Cyprian* who lived then, affirms the ſame, that the Lord's Prayer was us'd daily, for ſays he, *The Father will know the words of his own Son,* ſee *Cypr. de Orat. Dom. p.* 309. And the ſame *Cyprian* in his *Ep.* 8. *ad Cler. & Pleb. p.* 24. ſays, *Chriſt commanded us to pray for all men in a common Prayer wherein all agreed.* It appears alſo that the Prieſt and People pray'd by way of Reſponſes; as when the Prieſt ſaid, *Lift up your hearts,* the People anſwer'd, *We lift them up unto the Lord.* See *Cypr. de Orat. Dom.* §. 22. See more for this interchangable way of praying between Prieſt and People, B. *Bilſ.* of *Chriſtian Subjection,* part 4. P. 435.

In the same Century, *Origen* says, *They who served God through Jesus in the Christian way, use frequently night and day the injoined Prayers*: See *Orig. in Cels. l. 6. p.* 302.

And St. *Basil* in his Book *de Spirit. Sanct. c.* 29. *p.* 221. tells us, That *Gregory Thaumaturgus*, who was his Predecessor in the Bishoprick of *Neocæsarea* and cotemporary with St. *Cyprian*, composed a Liturgy, and appointed Ceremonies for that Church. And that too in an age when miraculous Gifts lasted.

In the beginning of the fourth Century, *Ann. Dom.* 312. the first Christian Emperor *Constantine* (as *Eusebius* tells us in his *Life of* Constantine, *lib.* 4. *c.* 17. *p.* 395.) order'd his Palace after the manner of a Church, and would take the Books himself into his hands, either for explaining the Holy Scripture, or repeating the prescrib'd Prayers in his Royal Family.

In the same Century, *Athanasius* Bishop of *Alexandria*, shews us, that the Priests and People pray'd by way of Responses in that Church; for in his *Epist.* to *Solitar. p.* 239. he says, *The People mourned and groaned to God in the Church, all of them crying to the Lord, and saying, Spare thy People, good Lord, spare them*, &c. By which it seems the Church did not think it enough then

then for the People to ſay, *Amen*, but appointed them diſtinct and intelligent anſwers.

In the ſame Century, the Council of *Laodicea*, *Can.* 15. *Bev. Tom.* 1. *p.* 459. appointed Canonical Singers, who ſang out of Books, and none but they were allow'd to begin the Hymns. And the ſame Council, *Can.* 18. *Bev. Tom.* 1. *p.* 461. Ordained that the very ſame Liturgy of Prayers, ſhould be uſed always both at three in the Afternoon and in the Evening. And now becauſe this Council is ſo plain evidence againſt the Diſſenters, that they have no way to anſwer it; they fly again to their laſt refuge, which is to deny the Authority of this Council; for, they ſay, this Council of *Laodicea* was but a Provincial Synod, or Council: But tho' we grant 'twas no more but a Provincial Synod, yet I hope a Provincial Council of Orthodox Biſhops were Good Authority. But beſides, this very Canon concerning Liturgies, was taken into the Code of the univerſal Church, and confirmed by the Council of *Chalcedon*, which was a general Council.

And that they us'd Forms of Prayer, and Reſponſes, and Alternate way of Singing in the *African* Church, appears by St. *Cyprian*

before: And by *Optatus Mileviánus*, *l.* 2. *p.* 47. for there he blames the *Donatists*, for shutting the mouth of all the People, and forcing them to be silent. See also St. *Augustine de Eccles. Dog. c.* 30. *Tom.* 3. *p.* 46. Many more Instances and Authorities may be given to the same purpose as St. *Basil*, *Ep.* 63. *p.* 843. and *Ep.* 68. *p.* 856. (where he says, That *a Prayer wherein there are not conjoin'd voices, is not half so strong as otherwise it would be*) *Conc. Carthag*, *Can.* 106. *Bev. Tom.* 1. *p.* 640. But I will referr the Reader to Dr. *Comber* of *Liturgies*, and Dr. *Falkner* his *Defence of Liturgies*.

Our Dissenters object against our alternate way of praying, as in our Litany, where the Priest says half the Sentence, and the People the rest, for that neither Priest nor People speak a complete Sentence, and therefore our Prayer is imperfect, and we do but mock God. But by what has been said it appears that this praying by way of Responses, was us'd in the purest Ages of the Church, and by the Holiest Men. But pray, Why may not the words make as perfect a Prayer when they are pronounced by two Mouths, as when only by one? Prayer is not the pronouncing of words, but the joining the desire and consent thereto, and this they may

do

do as well when they are pronounced by ſeveral Mouths as by one. They may as well ſay, That when a Tune is play'd by a Conſort of Muſick, and the Trebles reſt and let the Tenors and Baſes go on, as ſometimes they do, that the Tune is not a compleat and perfect Tune, for if you take either part ſingly, it is not; but altogether it is too great Advantage.

The Advantage of this way of Praying by Reſponſes is, That we can give our hearty Conſent to each Petition, after a more lively manner than by barely ſaying, *Amen*. And alſo by our frequent anſwering of whole Sentences, our Fancies are the more ſtirr'd up and enliven'd by ſhaking off that dulneſs and drowſineſs, that otherwiſe would be apt to ſeize upon our Spirits, in barely liſtening to one long continued Prayer.

And in the Primitive Church, they had certain Prayers for certain Times and Occaſions, as *Eaſter-Eve*, *&c.* See *Leo in Vit. Chryſoſt. Tom.* 8. *p.* 288. *&c.*

Thus much for the practice of the Primitive Church. Now let us come a little nearer our own time, and ſee what the Opinion of other Reformed Churches is concerning preſcrib'd Forms of Prayers and Liturgies; and this we do the rather, becauſe the Diſſenters

are perpetually calling upon us to reform our ſelves to the example of other Reform'd Churches. Tho' I think under favour, we of *England* have no more reaſon to follow the pattern of other Nations as to the Reforming and Governing of our Church, than we have to do ſo in Matters of State, ſince we have as abſolute and independent Power of Reforming our ſelves as any of them; and God be thank'd, as able and godly Miniſters both in Church and State to direct us therein. They may as well quarrel with us, becauſe we do not depoſe our King, and reduce our Government from that of a limited and mixt Monarchy, to a Commonwealth, like that of *Geneva*.

But ſince they inſiſt ſo muſt upon this, I will make it appear that the Church of *England* comes nearer to the judgment and practice of all the Reformed Churches, in uſing preſcribed Forms of Prayer, than the Diſſenters do in rejecting them.

I will begin with the *Lutheran* Churches, which I ſhew'd before, are acknowledged to be true Churches, and which far exceed in number the Churches that follow *Calvin*'s method. *Luther* himſelf compos'd a Form of *Common-Prayer* for the Church of *Wittemburg*, taken out of the Maſs Book: See

See *Luther's Epiſt. Tom.* 2. *p.* 384. And all the Churches of his Communion at this day do uſe a *Liturgy* containing Collects, Epiſtles, Goſpels for every *Sunday*, Prayers and Litanies, together with all other parts of Eccleſiaſtical Miniſtration, as our *Common-Prayer* Book does; and which agrees with ours almoſt *verbatim*, eſpecially in the Litany. And theſe are impos'd on the Churches, as particularly the Churches of *Denmark*, and the Churches in Upper *Hungary*, which are all *Lutheran*. And the *Lutheran* Churches do chant their publick Prayers as we do in our Cathedrals. And they obſerve Holy Days. See all this proved at large from their own writers by Dr. *Comber* his *Defence of Liturgies* 2*d. Part*, *p.* 305, *&c.*

Next for the Churches of *Poland*, and *Lithuania* in 2 Synods held there, *Ann. Dom.* 1633. and 1634. one certain Liturgy is injoin'd, to be us'd in all thoſe Dominions. Certain preſcrib'd Liturgies are alſo us'd in *Tranſilvania*, *Hungary*, *Bohemia*, &c. See at large Dr. *Comb. ubi Supra*, and Monſieur *Durell* his *View of the Government*, *and publick Worſhip of God in the Reformed Churches beyond Seas.* Printed, *London*, 1662.

Now

Now for the Churches Reform'd by *Calvin* and others; as *Geneva*, *France*, *Helvetia*, *Holland*, &c. *Calvin* compos'd a Form of Divine Service, which is us'd in the Church of *Geneva*, and those of *France* at this day, and their Ministers are bound to use them. And see *Calvin*'s Letter to the Protector of *England*, during the Minority of King *Ed.* 6. the Protector at that time, when the *Common-Prayer* Book was to be settled by Act of Parliament, thought fit first to Advice with so Eminent a Man, as *Calvin* was, about it. He writes to *Calvin* to know his Opinion therein; *Calvin* returns him this answer, *For so much as concerns the Prayers and Ecclesiastical Rites, I much approve that they be determined; so that it may not be lawful for the Ministers to vary from it, that it may be a help to the weakness of some; That it may be a Testimony of the Churches consent; And that it may put a stop to the levity of such as are for new things.* See *Calv. Ep. p.* 165. *Ep.* 87. to the Protector. And see his Letter to *Cox*, a Church of *England* Divine upon his Arrival at *Franckford*, among his Epistles, 164, 165.

See *Beza* his *Approbation of Forms of Prayer*, Tom. 2. p. 229.

In

In the *French* Church, *Marnay* Lord *Du-Pleſſis*, in his Book of the *Maſs*, allows of the Uſe and Antiquity of preſcribed Forms: See at large Dr. *Comber* of *Liturgies* 2d. Part, p. 313. And ſee there the famous Monſieur *Daille* agreeing herewith.

In the Church of *Helvetia*, *Bullinger* tells us, they uſed preſcribed Forms, keep Faſts and Holy-Days, *&c. Bulling. Decod.* 2. *Serm.* 1. *p.* 38.

The Churches of *Holland* uſe Forms of Prayer for Baptiſm, the Lord's Supper, and all occaſional Offices, and alſo Liturgies, *&c.* which are all put into a Book of *Common-Prayer*. And even in *Scotland* they have had a *Common-Prayer* Book, for there are ſome of them now extant, which were Printed, *Ann.* 1594. ſuppoſed to be writ by Mr. *Knox* for the uſe of the *Kirk* of *Scotland*. See the latter end of Dr. *Comber* his *Defence of Liturgies*, 2d. Part.

And the *Leyden* Profeſſors ſay, That Forms of Prayer are not only lawful, but very advantageous; becauſe every Chriſtian cannot fitly conceive new Prayers: and the attention of Auditors, are not a little help'd in great aſſemblies by uſual Forms. See Dr. *Falkner*, his *Libertas Eccleſiaſtica*. p. 121.

Thus much for Forms of Prayer in general:

neral: But ſome perhaps may object againſt our *Common-Prayer* in particular. To clear that, I think, 'twere ſufficient to tell them, that it has been approv'd of by all the learned and godly Divines of the Church of *England* ever ſince the Reformation, and confirm'd by ſeveral Parliaments: And it cannot reaſonably be ſuppos'd that God Almighty ſhou'd conceal his will from the greateſt number of the moſt learned, pious and judicious People of a Nation, notwithſtanding their frequent Prayers to God, that he would direct them, and their great Care and Study which they take to come to the knowledge of the truth; and reveal it only to a few, and thoſe of the rawer injudicious ſort, who have had leaſt time, and ſtudy, and means to come to greater Knowledge, ſuch as our Diſſenters generally are. This alone were ſufficient to recommend our particular *Common-Prayer*: But ſince our Diſſenters will not allow ſo many ſeveral Parliaments, and ſo many Succeſſions of Learned Divines to be competent judges in this matter, we are willing to ſtand to the judgment of our Neighbour Churches of the Reformed Religion concerning our *Common-Prayer*, and the other Matters in controverſy between us.

In

In King *Edward* 6th. his days, Archbiſhop *Cranmer* did requeſt the famous *Bucer* to peruſe the whole Book of *Common-Prayer*, in order to his cenſuring what he thought was to be amended. *Bucer* accordingly did ſo; and declares his judgment of it thus: *In the preſcript Form for the Communion, and the daily Prayers, I ſee nothing written in this Book, which is not taken out of the Word of God, if not in expreſs words, as the Pſalms and Leſſons, yet in ſence, as the Collects: And alſo the order of theſe Leſſons and Prayers, and the time when they are to be uſed, are very agreeable to the Word of God, and the Practice of the ancient Church.* See *Bucer*'s *Cenſure upon the Book of* Common-Prayer, *c.* 1. *p.* 457. And note this was before the *Common-Prayer* was amended as now it is. Some things 'tis true, *Bucer* did wiſh to be amended, which has been ſince done, and moſt of them according to his Advice there.

Next, the Archbiſhop of *Spalato* in his Book againſt *Suarez*, p. 340. ſays, That *the* Engliſh *Liturgy contains nothing in it, which is not Holy, which is not Pious, and truly Chriſtian as well as Catholick.*

Cauſabon in his Epiſtle to King *James* the firſt, affirms the ſame; And ſays farther,

ther, That *none at this day comes nearer the Form of the Ancient Church, following a middle way between those who have offended both in excess and defect.*

The next Authority for us is the learned *Grotius*, who 'tis certain had no Obligation to the Church of *England*, but rather the contrary. He says, *I am sure the* English *Liturgy, the Rite of laying on of Hands on Children in memory of Baptism, the Authority of Bishops, of Synods consisting of none but the Clergy*, &c. *do sufficiently agree to the Orders of the Ancient Church; from which we cannot deny but we have departed both in* France *and* Holland. See *Grotius ad Boassaer, Ep. 62. p. 21.*

The next is the famous *Lud. Capellus*, who was a famous *French* Divine of the Reformed Church, and Divinity Professor in a famous Protestant University. This Man lived to hear of our *Independent* Sect in *England*, and writ most Learnedly against 'em. Says he, *When miraculous Gifts ceas'd, there was a necessity for Liturgies, which were used in the First* IV. *Ages uncorrupted; but afterwards Corruptions were introduced by the following Popes. But upon the Reformation the Liturgy was purged from all its Corruptions, and has been happily used in the several Reform'd*

form'd Churches, and with good ſucceſs; until very lately (ſays he) *there aroſe a ſort of moroſe, ſcrupulous, (not to ſay downright ſuperſtitious) Men, who for many trifling Reaſons, of no moment, not only diſlike the Liturgy hitherto uſed in that Church, but would have both it, and the whole Order of Biſhops to be utterly aboliſhed; in place whereof they would ſubſtitute that, which they call their Directory,* &c. and ſo goes on. And then he proves at large, That Forms of Prayer, are not only neceſſary for the unlearned, but the learned alſo; and ſhews the inſufficiency of their Directory. And how ridiculous it is to ſuppoſe, That we have that extraordinary Gift of Prayer, that they had in the Apoſtles days, and ſome little time after. 'Twere too long to put it all down here, I will referr you to Dr. *Comber's Defence of Liturgies*, II. *Part*, *pag.* 325. and will go on to ſhew the Opinion of ſome of the moſt Eminent of our own Diſſenters concerning our Common-Prayer.

Mr. *Baxter* in his *Poor Man's Family Book*, *pag.* 336. ſays, *Do not peeviſhly pick quarrels with the Prayers of the Church, nor come to them with humourſome prejudice*, &c. And in his Preface to the ſame Book, he ſays, he mightily approves of Forms of Prayer.

See

See Dr. *Owen* to the ſame purpoſe, his *Evangelical Love, pag.* 54.

And Mr. Baxter in his *Diſpute of Liturgies, Prop.* 10. ſays farther, *That the conſtant diſuſe of Forms is apt to breed a giddineſs in Religion, and may make Men Hypocrites, who delude themſelves with conceits, that they delight in God, when 'tis but in thoſe Novelties and variety of Expreſſions that they are delighted.* See alſo *Gifford*, a Non-Conformiſt, his Anſwer to *Greenwood*; he writ a whole Treatiſe, proving the lawfulneſs of read Prayer.

And now I have ſhew'd, that Praying by Forms has been uſed by the Saints in the *Old Teſtament*, enjoyned by Chriſt in the *New*, practiſed by all the Holy Fathers and Devout Chriſtians who lived ever ſince the firſt ſetling of the Church; and is now allowed and practiſed in all the regular Proteſtant Churches, and approved by ſome of the moſt Eminent of our own Diſſenters. Let any Man now in his right Reaſon judge, whether praying by Forms be ſo wicked, and abominable a thing as moſt of our Diſſenters make it. One of the Non-Conformiſt Miniſters, in a Book which he Publiſh'd not many Years ſince, ſpeaking of Forms of Prayer, calls it, *That pitiful contemptible thing, called Uniformity in Words, and*

and Syllables, and Phraſes; which was never deſired of God, nor ever entered into his or his Son's heart. Let the World judge now, whether uſing Forms of Prayer, *&c.* be this pitiful, contemptible thing they are pleaſed to make it, or the Books that contain them deſerve no better uſage from Chriſtians, than to be burnt in the Streets by the Common Hangman. In the days of *Julian* there was never any thing done more wicked, than to burn the Holy Bible: But even to that height are thoſe who call themſelves Chriſtians arrived already, in our Neighbouring Kingdom: if theſe things be ſuffered, what muſt we think will follow.

But the main Text of Scripture, which our Diſſenters rely on, for to defend their Extempore Prayers is, *Rom.* viij. 26. where St. *Paul* ſays, *The Spirit helpeth your Infirmities*; and therefore they conclude, they ought to uſe no outward helps. But I have ſhew'd before, That outward helps are to be uſed, as Kneeling, lifting up the Hands and Eyes, *&c.* So that 'tis plain they miſtake this Text of Scripture. And 'tis evident they do ſo, for that all the Fathers, and the moſt Eminent Men of the Church, as *Calvin*, *Luther*, &c. whenever they recommended the uſe of Liturgies, they gave this Reaſon for

it among others, To prevent the inconveniences which ſome Mens folly would betray them to in their uſing raſh and unpremeditated Prayers: Now if the Spirit helpeth our Infirmities in the ſence that our Diſſenters will have it: How come all theſe learned Men; yea, and Mr. *Baxter* himſelf, *&c.* to recommend Forms as neceſſary for the helping of our Infirmities, and ſo make the Holy Spirit inſufficient? Shall we believe that all theſe learned Men did not underſtand the meaning of that Text ſo well as ſome of our Diſſenters do? 'Tis very likely that St. *Auguſtine* and St. *Chryſoſtom* (who liv'd nearer the Apoſtles days by above Twelve Hundred Years, than any of our Non-conformiſts) might have underſtood the Apoſtles meaning, better than any of them: Now let us hear what their ſence was of theſe words of St. *Paul, We know not what to pray for, as we ought, but the Spirit helpeth our Infirmities.* St. *Aug. ad Prob. Ep.* 121. *p.* 129. will not grant that any Chriſtians wanted the Spirit to help them with words and expreſſions: For he ſays, It is not credible that the Apoſtle or they to whom he wrote were ignorant of the Lord's Prayer. And therefore they muſt neceſſarily have known what to have pray'd

pyra'd for; therefore these words, (*The Spirit helpeth our Infirmities*) he tells us must be expounded, of the Spirit's giving us patience not to pray absolutely to be delivered out of our afflictions, but in God's due time. And St. *Chrysostom* in his *Hom.* 14. *in* 8. *Rom. p.* 120. says, *That there was a miraculous gift of Prayer in the Apostles days*; to which St. *Paul* alluded in those words (*The Spirit helpeth our Infirmities.*) But he tells us there, that 'twas ceas'd long since, that is, before his days, tho' he liv'd in the fourth Century; so that whatever the Apostles meaning was then, it can no ways be taken in the sence our Dissenters would have it, nor does it condemn prescribed Forms, now that that miraculous gift of Prayer is ceased.

But were there no other Argument against the use of *extempore* Prayers in publick Assemblies, than the inconveniency of them, 'twere sufficient to reject them: 'Tis impossible that Order or Unity can be preserv'd in any Church, where every Congregation hath liberty to Worship God in a different way from all the rest; one Minister praying for one thing, and another perhaps for the quite contrary at the same time, according to their different judgments

and intereſts, as was uſual in the late times, when that *extempore* way was us'd. Beſides, in great Congregations, 'tis impoſſible that all the People ſhould keep their attention ſo well fixt on an *extempore* Prayer to which they are utter ſtrangers, as on a Prayer to which they have been accuſtom'd: For how can they join with the Miniſter in every Petition as they ought to do, till they have reflected a little upon what it was he ſaid, for when the Miniſter is left to his own Fancy in his Prayer, 'tis very like he may either through miſtake or wilfully come out with ſome Petition that all his hearers cannot join with him in: So that 'tis neceſſary for every one of the Congregation to watch every expreſſion, and reflect a little on it, before he conſent to it. In the mean time, the eloquent Paſtor to ſhew his extraordinary Gift of Prayer, runs away with the buſineſs, as if his *Tongue* was indeed *the Pen of a ready writer*. Thus the poor People muſt either be left behind, or join with him at random.

Another inconveniency which attends *extempore* Prayer, is, That 'tis impoſſible for a Man who truſts to his own Memory, to retain all his wants, and the wants and neceſſities of the People ſo in his Mind, but that

that ſomething or other, will very oft be forgotten, which may be avoided by uſing of a well compos'd Form.

But again, Can we reaſonably imagine that God Almighty can be pleas'd with vain repetitions, and with bald, and unproper, and (too often) nonſenſical expreſſions ſuch as uſually attend their *extempore* Prayers? Doubtleſs he cannot; for where he has given Judgment, and Wit, and Eloquence, he expects it ſhould be us'd in his Service, as well as in our worldly buſineſs. Our Saviour bids us, *When we pray, not to uſe vain repetitions, nor think to be heard for our much ſpeaking*, Matth. 6. 7. And *Solomon, Eccleſ.* 5. 1, 2. ſays, *Keep thy feet when thou goeſt to the houſe of the Lord; and be not raſh with thy mouth and let not thine heart be haſty to utter any thing before God, for God is in Heaven and thou on Earth, therefore let thy words be few.* How agreeable now this Doctrine is to the practice of the Diſſenters, in their raſh approaching to God with a long inconſiderate Prayer, let any Man judge. When they made their Addreſſes to the late King *James*; they drew it up with all the caution and premeditation imaginable, and every Sentence was carefully conſidered on by

ſeveral of the beſt Heads among them, but they addreſs the great King of Heaven, with the raſh and inconſiderate expreſſions of one Perſon, and he perhaps, a weak one too.

But ſome of them ſay, Why ſhould not Miniſters be tied to a Form of Preaching, as well as of Praying? Why ſure, there is a great deal of difference between Preaching and Praying: Preaching is directed to a Congregation, which is made up of ſeveral People, who have different Capacities and Apprehenſions, and therefore require different Phraſes and Arguments to move them. Some are drawn with one Argument, ſome with another, ſome apprehend a Man's meaning by one Expreſſion, ſome by another, according as they are ſuited to their ſeveral Capacities; ſo that 'tis impoſſible to frame a Form in Preaching, to anſwer all theſe ends. But Prayers are directed to one God, who is always the ſame, and not to be pleaſed with variety of Phraſes.

I ſhall conclude this Point with this obſervation, That thoſe who are moſt inveterate againſt Praying by Forms, do daily uſe the ſame individual Form themſelves, word for word, throughout the whole year, as any one that frequent their publick or private Meetings, may obſerve.

The

The Third ſort of Pleas which the Diſſenters uſe for Separation, are ſuch as relate to their Conſciences: For, ſay they, What tho' the Terms of Communion with the Church of *England* be lawful, ſince we cannot ſatisfy our Conſciences, that they are ſo? We muſt not act againſt our Conſciences, for that were ſin in us. For St. *Paul* ſays, *Let every one be fully perſwaded in his own mind*, Rom. 14.

But I anſwer firſt, this Scripture is meant of indifferent things, and no other as appears by the coherence of the words with the whole Chapter: For the Apoſtle is there ſpeaking of *Meats*, *Times*, *Days*, &c. and blames the *Romans* for condemning, and quarrelling with one another about them.

But Secondly, 'Tis plain that * Scruples of Conſcience will not excuſe from ſin, in ſome Caſes. For 'tis agreed by all, that Conſcience will not excuſe from ſin, unleſs all proper helps and means are us'd to inform our Judg-

* *Note when we refuſe any thing injoin'd by Authority, we muſt be certain that the thing injoin'd is unlawful; for a doubting Conſcience will not excuſe our diſobedience. A doubting Conſcience, is when the Conſcience is in ſuch a perfect Æquilibrium or ſuſpence, as that there appears no more reaſon on the one ſide of the queſtion, than on the other; in ſuch caſe the command of Authority turns the Scales, and makes it neceſſary for us to obey, ſince for ought we know, the thing may be as well lawful as not.*

ments, and to come to the right knowledge of the thing ſcrupled; This Mr. *Baxter* owns in his *Diſpute of Church Government*, p. 483. where he ſays, That *if a Man through ignorance or prejudice, takes unlawful things to be lawful, or lawful things to be unlawful, this will not excuſe him in his diſobedience.* Suppoſe then for Inſtance, that the Magiſtrate impoſes a thing which he lawfully may impoſe; as that all Men ſhould begin the publick Worſhip at an hour, and end at an hour. The Quakers, they ſay, This is ſtinting of the Spirit, and therefore ſinful, and that they cannot in Conſcience Communicate with us, till it be remov'd, I will ask a Presbyterian or Independent, whether this be a ſinful Separation or not, they will own it is, notwithſtanding their pretended Scruple of Conſcience: For the ſin muſt needs lie ſome where, either on thoſe who impoſe the thing, or on thoſe who ſeparate; not on thoſe who impos'd it, becauſe they allow the thing injoyn'd to be lawful, therefore it muſt be on thoſe who ſeparate, becauſe they do not inform themſelves truly of the lawfulneſs of the thing ſcrupled. And indeed, if a bare Scruple of Conſcience will juſtify Separation, the Anabaptiſts and all other Sects, may

as

as well juſtify their Separation from the Presbyterians and Independents, as they can do theirs from the Church of *England*. And by the ſame Rule, we may ſubdivide, till there be as many Religions as Men.

I grant that the Obligations of Conſcience are the greateſt that can be, and to act againſt the clear Dictates of a Man's Conſcience, is a very great ſin; but this muſt be meant of a Conſcience when all due care and diligence has been us'd to rectify and inform it. And then what is this to the caſe of our Diſſenters? Do they ſeparate from the Church out of pure Conſcience? *yes*, ſay they, *doubtleſs we do*: But have they us'd all proper means to inform their judgments, and come to the knowledge of the truth? Surely they will not ſay they have. Are not the greateſt part of the Diſſenters a poor illiterate ſort of People, who know nothing of the Controverſie between us, nor ever trouble their heads about it; but will go to the Meetings, becauſe their Fathers and Mothers did ſo before them, and will rail at the Church, tho' ask them what is amiſs in it ſeriouſly, and they cannot tell you. And as for thoſe few of the better ſort among them, who perhaps, have had greater advantages of Education, is it not remark-

remarkable that they Read and Converſe altogether on one ſide, and aſſociate themſelves into Clubs and Cabals of ſuch who are of the ſame Opinion with themſelves, but avoid all occaſions of creating the leaſt intimacy with any who differ from them in Opinion? And if any ſhall but offer to inform them, tho' in never ſo peaceable and friendly a manner, does it not prove the occaſion of an eternal Quarrel? or at leaſt put a ſtop to any farther intimacy between them? Is not this truly the caſe among them? I appeal to their own Conſciences, whether this be truth which I ſay. How can theſe Men pretend then that they have us'd all proper means to ſatisfie their Conſciences? They who really ſcruple things out of tenderneſs of Conſcience, would be ſincerely willing to be better inform'd, and would look upon them as their beſt Friends who endeavour to inform them, but inſtead of this, they fly out into rage and violent Paſſions againſt thoſe who offer to remove their Scruples, and for their kindneſs, return moſt reproachful, bitter Language, both on the Perſons, tho' never ſo Eminent, and the thing tho' never ſo Sacred; which is viſible in all their Books of Controverſie. And even in common Diſcourſe, How difficult is it to obtain from the

Zeal

Zeal of many of our Diſſenters ſo much truce as to hear what one can ſay to them, with patience and civility? They tell us in plain terms we may ſpare our breath, and not pretend to teach them, they underſtand their Duty better than we do; They are ſatisfied in their own minds that they are in the right, and will not be wheedled out of their Opinion, by all that we can ſay. This is truth, Mr. *Baxter* himſelf has own'd as much in his Anſwer to Dr. *Stillingfleet*, p. 81. where he affirms in his own name, and the name of his People, That *he who thinks that his own or others reaſonings will ever change all the truly honeſt Chriſtians in the Land, knows ſo little of Matters, or of Men, or of Conſcience, as that he is not fit to be a Biſhop or a Prieſt.* What will they ſay now to this, will their Scruples of Conſcience excuſe their Separation and Diſobedience, when 'tis evident they will not uſe the proper means to ſatisfie their Conſciences?. Nay farther, When they declare 'tis needleſs to go about to remove their Scruples, for they are reſolv'd beforehand they will not be convinc'd? Let no Man ſay ſo for ſhame, 'tis againſt common Reaſon, and the Opinion of all learned Men, and even of Mr. *Baxter* himſelf.

But

But we will ſuppoſe for once, that every particular Diſſenter has done his utmoſt indeavour to ſatisfie his Conſcience, and that after all they cannot conquer their Scruples; What then? Muſt they therefore proceed to Separation? No, this was never allowed by Chriſt nor his Apoſtles, nor by any Chriſtian Church ſince their time, not even by our Diſſenters themſelves heretofore. Our Saviour himſelf did not ſeparate from the Jewiſh Church, though there were many things amiſs in it, nor adviſe others to do ſo, ſays *Vines*, a Non-Conformiſt, in his Book on the Sacrament, *pag.* 39. In the Apoſtles days we find there were ſome who ſcrupled ſome things that were enjoin'd, but notwithſtanding the difference of Men's Judgments, and their pretended Scruples of Conſcience, the Apoſtles did preſcribe Rules of Uniformity, and allow'd none to Separate from the Church, and frequent Meetings of their own ſetting up, becauſe they could not conquer their Scruples. And this very Argument did the Aſſembly of Divines at *Weſtminſter*, *Anno Dom.* 1648. uſe againſt their Diſſenting Brethren, the *Independents*, who pleaded for Separation upon the account of Conſcience, as the Diſſenters do now. *See Papers for Accommodation*, pag. 111.

111. And when the *Independents* told them they could not ſatisfie their Conſciences ſo as to Conform to their Church Government; and therefore begg'd, That they may be allow'd ſeparate Congregations, the Aſſembly poſitively refuſed it, and urged them to Conform to their way of Worſhip, *&c.* and charged them with Schiſm if they did not: For, ſay they, *To deſire ſeparate Congregations, as to thoſe parts of Worſhip where they own they can join with us, is very unreaſonable; for tenderneſs of Conſcience may juſtifie non-Communion in the thing ſcrupled, but it cannot juſtifie a Separation:* See the Papers for Accommodation, *pag.* 20, 21, 22, 51, *&c. For if it ſhould,* ſay they, *it then would make way for infinite Diviſions, and ſub-Diviſions, and give countenance to perpetual Schiſm in the Church,* ib. p. 68, 73, &c. And then the Aſſembly juſtifie themſelves in ſo doing, by the practice of the Saints in the Apoſtles days: For they tell them, they deſire no more of them hereby, than what they were confident was practiſed by the Saints at *Philippi*; namely, *To hold practical Communion in things wherein they Doctrinally agreed,* ib. p. 115. So that if the judgment of their own Brethren in a full Aſſembly, may be taken upon the moſt weighty

Debate

Debate and ſerious Deliberation; their ſetting up ſeparate Meetings, and forſaking the Church upon the account of ſome Scruples which they pretend they cannot conquer, is Sinful and Schiſmatical.

And when the Aſſembly of Divines was preſſed farther by their Diſſenting Brethren, they deſired them to anſwer in this one thing, *Whether ſome muſt be denyed the liberty of their Conſcience in matters of practice or none? If none, then* (ſay they) *we muſt Renounce our Covenant, and let in Prelacy again, and all other ways: If a denial of Liberty to ſome may be juſt, then Uniformity may be ſettled notwithſtanding Men's different Judgments or pretence of Conſcience*, Papers for Accommodation, *pag.* 116.

Agreeable hereto is the practice of the *Independents* themſelves, where they have the power; as in *New-England*, no Separation is there allow'd upon the account of Scruples of Conſcience, as appears by their Book of Statutes which they have lately Printed; and by their telling Mr. *Williams*, a famous Miniſter among them, that if nothing will ſerve him but Separation, becauſe he could not conquer his Scruples, The World was wide enough; and ſo away they baniſh'd them in the midſt of Winter.

From

From what has been ſaid it appears, That though there were ſome things amiſs in the Church of *England*, which our Diſſenters could not ſatisfie their Conſciences about, yet this would not juſtifie Separation from the Church, though perhaps it might (after due pains taken to inform themſelves aright concerning them) juſtifie their non-Communion in the things ſcrupled. Now I will ſhew that there is really no cauſe to forſake the Church of *England* upon the account of Conſcience; And that all thoſe who do forſake the Church, and frequent ſeparate Meetings, are condemn'd for Schiſmaticks by the moſt Eminent Divines of all the Reformed Churches beyond Seas, and by Mr. *Baxter*, Dr. *Owen*, Mr. *Gifford*, *Corbet*, and many other of the Non-Conformiſts themſelves heretofore.

For, Firſt, they all agree, That no Man is obliged in Conſcience to ſeparate from any Church that is ſound in Doctrine, and has the Sacraments rightly and duly adminiſter'd. The Scripture allows Separation only in theſe three caſes; *Firſt*, In caſe of Idolatrous Worſhip. *Secondly*, In caſe of Falſe Doctrine impoſed inſtead of True. And, *Thirdly*, In caſe things indifferent be made neceſſary to Salvation. But where theſe

these Three are wanting, nothing will justifie Separation. See Canon *Nicen.* 6, 15, 16. *Constant.* c. 6. *Chalced.* 17, 20, 26. *Antioch.* c. 2, 5. *Cod. Eccles. Afr.* c. 53, 55. *Conc. Gangr.* c. 6. *Conc. Carth.* c. 10, 11. *Cod. Can. Eccles. Univ. Can.* 65. All these Canons and many more do condemn Separation from a Church that is sound in Doctrine, and has the Sacraments rightly and duly Administred. So does *Calvin* in his *Inst. lib.* 4. c. 1. *numb.* 9. where he says, That great allowances ought to be made to such Churches, by the Example of the Apostolical Churches. And, *ibid. Sect.* 10. he says, That *the Lord esteem'd him a runnagade, and forsaker of Religion, whosoever he be, that separated frowardly from any Christian Society, which imbraceth but the true Ministry of the Word and Sacraments.* And, *ibid. Sect.* 12. he says, That *though something that is faulty may creep in, either in the Administration of the Word or of the Sacraments, yet we ought not to separate us from the Communion of that Church; For,* says he, *there are principles of Religion, without which we cannot be saved; and there are other points in which Men may differ, and yet the Unity of the Faith be kept.* And, *ibid. Sect.* 13. he says, *It is not for every private Man to separate from the Communion of a Church,*

though

tho' faulty in some things, &c. *Beza* in his *Epist.* 24. *p.* 148. agrees herein, so does Monsieur *Daille*, and several other of the Foreign Divines: See Dr. *Still. Misch. of Separ.* 23. and 97. so does the Assembly of Divines, as I have just now shewn, and Papers for *Accommodation*, *p.* 52. they declare farther, That *they look upon Separation from a true Church, tho' somethings may be amiss in it, not as a sin of mere humane Infirmity, but as a wilful and dangerous sin.* And Mr. *Baxter* in his *Poor Man's Family Book*, p. 347. tells us, *Many Churches were blam'd in Scripture, but none are requir'd to Separate from them.* See the Answer to Dr. *Stillingfleet*'s Sermon by several Non-conformists, where they all acknowledge our Worship in the nature of it, to be intrinsecally good, and a total Separation from it sinful, *ibid. p.* 31. So then it seems so long as a Church retains the Marks and Signs of a true Church, tho' there be many things amiss in such a Church, Separation from it is sinful.

But what if open sinners be admitted to the Communion before they have made publick Confession of their Faults, as is too frequent in the Church of *England*, must I be obliged to communicate with such? May I not Separate in such case? The Apostle,

1 *Cor.* 5. 11, 12, 13. bids us, *If any that is call'd a brother be a Fornicator, an Idolater, or Covetous,* &c. *with such see that ye eat not.* I answer, That this very reason did the *Donatists* in St. *Augustine*'s days give (among others) for their Separation, and quoted the same Texts of Scripture, but they were condemn'd for Schismaticks as I shewed before. And St. *Augustine* and all the Catholick Bishops did then agree that these Texts were meant only of Separation in heart, not in body. And therefore they say, *When such a multitude offends as that the casting of them out, would be in danger to cause a Schism, there they ought to be tolerated, least while ye go about to pull up the tares, ye pull up the wheat also,* therefore *let them both grow together* (say they) *till the harvest.* But when only a few are guilty of scandalous sins, there they say, *Let not the severity of Discipline cease*; but it must not be so severe as to *root* up, but to *amend.* See *Aug. lib.* 3. against *Permenian* a *Donatist* Bishop, *ch.* 3. *lib.* 2. *c.* 18.

And herewith agrees *Calv. lib.* 4. *Instit. c.* 1. *sect.* 13. where he says, That *tho' sinners be admitted to Communion, we ought to keep our selves from their fellowship, but not to Separate from the Church.* Mr. *Baxter* says

ſays the ſame in his *Poor Man's Family Book*, p. 347. and *Vines, on the Sacrament*, p. 39.

But ſuppoſe the Parſon of the Pariſh be weak, or a Man of a looſe Converſation, and I can hear a better Preacher elſewhere, and a Man of a more exemplary Holy Life, and Converſation, May not I go to that Church or Meeting where I find moſt Edification? No, For this ſtill makes way for Schiſms and Diviſions in the Church, and therefore was never allow'd in any regular Church, provided the Parſon of the Pariſh be tolerable. The Followers of *Eſtathius Sebaſtenus*, who ſeparated upon this account in *Paphlagonia*, were condemned of Schiſm by the Council at *Gangra*.; and ſee *Calvin*'s *Inſtit. lib.* 4. *c.* 1. *ſect.* 13. to the ſame purpoſe.

And indeed, it is not reaſonable that ſo ignorant and proud, unpeaceable ſort of People, as Mr. *Baxter* himſelf in his *Sacraleg. Diſſert.* p. 102. *&c.* confeſſes the ordinary ſort of zealous Profeſſors of Religion to be, ſhou'd be at liberty to rend and tear a Church to pieces, out of a conceit of a purer way of Worſhip, as if they knew what was better for their Edification, than the Wiſdom of the whole Nation in Parliament, and the Governors of the Church do. The pretence of greater Edification was ne-

ver allow'd by the Diſſenters themſelves heretofore, as a ſufficient cauſe for Separation, as appears by the *Papers for Accommodation*, and the *Grand Debate*, both Printed when the Aſſembly of Divines ſat at *Weſtminſter*. Nor did Mr. *Baxter* ever allow of this to be a ſufficient cauſe for Separation, as appears by his *Cure of Diviſions*, p. 393. where he ſets forth the pernicious Conſequences of complying with the ungovernable and factious Humours of the ordinary ſort of People who are ever apt to revile the beſt and graveſt Miniſters, and follow the more conceited, and ſuch as are of moſt fierce and bitter Spirits. And in his *Poor Man's Family Book*, p. 280. he ſays, *For want of underſtanding the right Terms of Church Communion, how woful are our Diviſions, you muſt have Union and Communion in Faith, and Love with all Chriſtians; Let your uſual Meeting be with the pureſt Churches, if you lawfully may, and ſtill reſpect the publick good: But ſometimes occaſionally Communicate with defective faulty Churches, ſo be it, they are true Churches, and put you not upon ſin: Think not that your preſence makes all the faults of Miniſtry, Worſhip, or People to be yours (for then I would join with no Church in the World.) Diviſion is wounding,*

and

and tends to Death, abhor it as you love the Churches welfare or your own, &c. And again, *ib. p.* 330. *If your Minister* (says he) *be intolerable through Ignorance, Heresy or Malignity, forsake him utterly; but if he be tolerable, though weak and cold; and if you cannot remove your dwelling, then publick Order, and your Soul's Edification must be joined as well as you can: In* London, *or other Cities, you may go ordinarily to another Parish Church; but in the Country, and where 'twould be a great offence, you may one part of the day hear in one Parish, and another in the next, if there be a Man much fitter, but notwithstanding, you must communicate with the Church you dwell in.* And a little after, he says, *I advise you if there be Parish Churches orderly settled under the Magistrates Countenance, whose teachers are sound, tho' an abler Minister should gather a separate Congregation in the same place, out of that and other neighbouring Parishes, and should have stricter Communicants and Discipline, be not too forward to join your self to that separated Church, till you can prove that the hurt that will follow by discord, offence, division, encouraging of Schisms and Pride,* &c. *is not likely to be greater than your benefit can compensate; but if this separate Church*

be a factious Church, set up contentiously against the Concordant Churches, tho' on pretence of greater purity, and if their Meetings be imploy'd in contemning and reviling other Churches whose People are not of their mind, and in puffing up themselves with Pride, as if they were the only true Churches of Christ, avoid such separate Churches, as the enemies of Love and Peace. And again, in the same Book, *p.* 336. he bids us, *Not peevishly pick quarrels with the Prayers of the Church, nor come to them with humorsome prejudice: think not that you must stay away, or go out of the Church for every passage that is disorderly, unmeet, yea or unsound or untrue; for the words of Prayer are the work of Men, and while all Men are fallible, imperfect and sinful, their Prayers and Preaching will be like themselves, and he that is the highest pretender and the peevishest quarreller hath his own failings,* &c.

So that if our Dissenters will allow their own Mr. *Baxter* to be a competent judge, or any of the other learned Divines beforesaid, they must own, that neither the weakness of the Ministry, nor better Edification, is a sufficient cause for Separation.

But there is another thing, say they, which makes it necessary for us to separate from the

the Church of *England*, and that is the Oaths and Subſcriptions which they require from us. What ſays Mr. *Baxter* to this? Why, Mr. *Baxter* in his *Poor Man's Family Book*, p. 331. ſays, *If a Church in other reſpects ſound require of you any falſe Subſcriptions, Promiſes, or Oaths, or any unlawful thing, you muſt not do it, but hold Communion in other lawful things.* It ſeems then he does not allow of Separation upon this account neither.

The Scruples which Men make to the Oaths and Declarations, are grounded upon miſtakes, for that they take the words in a ſtrained and unnatural Sence. Whereas if they would remember what the famous Biſhop *Sanderſon* tells us, *De Juran. Prælect. 6. ſect. 12. p.* 177. And what all learned Men do agree in, to wit, *That in every Oath, all thoſe Conditions or Exceptions ought to be underſtood, which by right or common uſe, are implied in it*, viz. *as far as I can; and 'tis lawful*

But for the farther ſatisfying of ſuch well-meaning Perſons as are ſcrupulous, 'twere much to be wiſh'd that theſe Oaths, Subſcriptions, &c. and the other things required by the Act of Uniformity *were altered, and explained by Act of* Parliament *according to the Bill drawn up by the Dean of St.* Pauls, *which the Diſſenters (eſpecially the Preſbyterians) are willing to agree to, and have made the very ſame Propoſals themſelves in their Anſwer to Dr.* Stillingfleet's *Sermon, at the latter end.* Vide.

lawful for me; things remaining in the same, state, &c. With these Conditions, there is nothing in these Oaths or Subscriptions, that can reasonably be scrupled; and without them, 'tis impossible to frame an Oath that a Man can safely venter to swear to.

Besides, though these Subscriptions were sufficient cause for Separation, how can the Lay People justifie their Separation upon this account? No such Oaths or Subscriptions are required of them, they are only required from the Ministers. Why then do the People forsake the Church? Is it in reverence to the Ministers, least they should have none to Preach to? This is what they never could answer with any colour of Reason; and therefore many of the Non-Conformist Ministers do frequently in discourse fairly and honestly own, that the Terms of Lay-Communion with the Church of *England* are easy enough, but the only thing they stick at is the terms of Ministerial Communion. The only Answer that ever I heard made to this, is in a Book call'd, *An Answer to Dr.* Stillingfleet's *Sermon*, by some Non-Conformists, *pag.* 6. They tell us, That they must not justifie themselves in their Preaching, and leave the People in Schism; (I must needs say, this was kindly done of them,

them, for 'twere very unfriendly in them to draw the poor ſilly People into Schiſm, and when they have done, to ſlip their own Necks out of the collar, and leave the People in the lurch;) and therefore they quickly find an Anſwer to ſtop their Mouths, whom they knew would never examine it: Say they, we are Miniſters of Chriſt, and have a Commiſſion to Preach, and therefore the People may lawfully forſake the Church to hear us, for we muſt not Preach to the Stone Walls. But pray will this Reaſon juſtifie the People in leaving their Pariſh Church, and their own lawful Miniſter, to run after a ſtranger, for fear he ſhould want a Congregation to Preach to? If the King ſhould give a Gentleman a Commiſſion to raiſe a Regiment, does this oblige Men that have formerly Liſted themſelves under other Officers, to leave their Service, and follow him? No, ſure. There are in the Two Univerſities many Hundred young Men that are qualified for the Miniſtry, perhaps as well as moſt of the Non-Conformiſt Miniſters, and are not yet called to the Office, nor provided with Churches; ſuppoſe all theſe now were admitted into Orders, and ſcatter'd all over the Kingdom, are the People obliged to run away from their lawful Miniſter,

Minister, orderly set over them; and divide the Parishes each perhaps into Three or Four, to furnish all these new made Ministers with Congregations to Preach to? An excellent contrivance this, of our Reverend Non-Conformist Ministers, to entail the Church Revenue upon them and their Successors for ever, without being beholding to King, Bishop, or Patron; and without any possibility of ever being cut off or forfeited; all the Lawyers in *England* could not have devised so good a security for them, as they have subtlely done here for themselves. They may Preach what Doctrine they please, for the Government or against it; they have a Commission to Preach, and the People are therefore bound, they say, to hear them. For *Preaching and Hearing*, they say, *are Relatives, and the one does necessarily suppose the other.* 'Tis true indeed, actual Preaching supposes Hearing, so do actual Governours necessarily suppose a People to be Govern'd: But a Commission to Govern, does not necessarily suppose a People actually to be Govern'd; for there may be Governours appointed and made, though there be then no People for them to Govern; as was resolved by all the Judges of *England*, in the Case of *Sutton*'s Hospital, *Co. Rep.* 10. *fol.* 32. *a.* So their Commission

sion to Preach does not necessarily draw with it People to be preached to, but only warrants their Preaching where 'tis really wanted, and when they can have People to Preach to without injuring others, or disturbing the Peace of a settled true Christian Church. But to say no more in a matter so clear, I have already shew'd, that there lies no Obligation upon any Non-Conformist Minister to Preach in *England*, and consequently there can be no necessity for the People to hear them.

The Oaths and Subscriptions are required only of the Clergy, and is no more than what other Reformed Churches require of all theirs. By the Constitution of the *French* Church, every Minister that will not subscribe to the Orders among them, is to be declared a Schismatick. And by the Constitution of *Geneva*, any Minister that contemns the Authority of their Church, or by his obstinacy disturbs the Order of it, shall be first summon'd before the Magistrate, and if that will not do, he shall be Excommunicated; but no Separation allow'd. And *Calvin* says, *Ep. Olevian. pag.* 311, & 122. *Let him that will not submit to the Orders of a Society be cast out.* Our Dissenters themselves did oblige all to Swear Solemnly to

their

their Covenant, under pain of Sequeſtration.

But, ſay the Diſſenters, *What if the Church of* England *Excommunicates us; may we not then lawfully Separate and ſet up Meetings of our own?* I Anſwer, 'tis true, the Laws of the Church do ſay, that in ſome caſes Men are Excommunicated *ipſo facto*, yet this does not oblige any, to ſeparate from Communion, till Sentence be duly and judicially pronounced in a Church. For by the Civil Law, notwithſtanding Excommunication *ipſo facto*, a Declaratory Sentence of the Judge is neceſſary before a Man ſhall be deny'd the benefit of Communion. And the ſaying a Man is Excommunicated, *ipſo facto*, ſignifies no more, than that the Judge may give Sentence without any new judicial Proceſs. But though our Diſſenters were actually Excommunicated for their Diſobedience, this would not excuſe them from Schiſm; as Dr. *Stillingfleet* has proved at large, *Miſch. of Separ. p.* 370.

Thus I have ſhew'd, that none of thoſe Pleas which are commonly uſed by the Diſſenters for their Separation from us, are ſufficient to juſtifie Separation from a True Church. Now if I can prove, That the Church of

England

England is a True Reform'd Church, they must either Renounce their Principles of Separation, or their Reason.

The only Argument I shall here make use of to prove, that the Church of *England* is a True Reform'd Church, is, That it is so acknowledged by all the Reform'd Churches in the World; who do all own her as a Sister; and also, by the most Eminent of our own Dissenters themselves.

All the Reform'd Churches beyond Seas do own the Church of *England* as a True Reform'd Church, and yet they know what her Faults be in her Assemblies, in her Worship, in her Ministry and Government. And this appears by the *Harmony of Confessions of the Churches*, Collected and set forth by the Churches of *France* and of the *Low-Countries*: They do receive and approve of the Confession of the Church of *England*, and call it one of the True Reform'd Churches. *Calvin* has acknowledged the same, in his writings against the *Brownists*; and condemns them for Schismaticks, for separating from it: See his *Instit. lib.* 4. *c.* 1. And the famous *Causabon* in his Epistle to King *James* I. declares plainly, *That none at this day comes nearer the form of the Ancient Church, than the Church of* England *does.*

dors. Grotius ad Boatslaer, Ep. 62. acknowledges the same: To which I shall add the Opinion of Two of the most Eminent Reform'd Divines at this day beyond Seas.

The one is Monsieur *L' Moyn*, Professor of Divinity at *Leyden*, in his Letter to the Bishop of *London*, *Anno Dom.* 1680. who wrote to him to know his Judgment concerning our present Divisions in *England*: *L' Moyn* writes him a long Letter, which you may see at large at the latter end of Dr. *Stillingfleet's Mischief of Separation*: I shall only repeat some of it: *Where was it ever seen* (says he, after he had been highly condemning our Dissenters for Separation) *that the Salvation of Men was concern'd for Articles of Discipline, and things which regard but the out-side, and Order of the Church. Truly these are never accounted in the number of essential Truths: And as there is nothing but these that can save, so there is nothing but these that can exclude from Salvation. For the Episcopal Government, what is there in it that is dangerous, and may reasonably alarm Men's Consciences? And if this be capable of depriving Men of Eternal Glory, and shutting the Gates of Heaven, who was there that entred there for the space of 1500. Years, since that, for all that time, all the Churches of the World had no other*

other kind of Government? If it were contrary to the Truth, is it credible that God had so highly approved it and permitted his Church to be tyrannized over by it for so many Hundred Years, &c. *Therefore since all the Reformed Churches do look upon the Church of* England, *not only as a Sister, but as an elder Sister, how comes it to pass, that some* English-men *themselves have so ill an Opinion of her at present, as to separate rashly from her? For to speak the Truth, I do not see their separate Meetings are of any great use, or that one may be more Comforted there, than in the Episcopal Churches. When I was at* London, *almost Five Years ago, I went to several of their Meetings, to see what way they took for the Instruction of their Hearers; but, I profess, I was not at all Edified by it. I heard one of the most famous Non-Conformists, he Preached in a place where there were about Fourscore Women, and a few Men: He had chosen a Text about the Building up the Ruines of* Jerusalem; *and for Explication of it, he cited* Pliny *and* Vitruvius, *I believe an Hundred times: And did not forget to mention a Proverb in* Italian, Duro con duro non fa muro, *All this seem'd to me nothing to the purpose, and very improper for his Auditory. To Cantonize themselves, and make a Schism, to*

have

have the liberty to vent such Vanities seems very ill Conduct: And the People seem very weak to quit their mutual Assemblies for things that so little deserve their esteem and preference: I do not think that any one is obliged to suffer such Irregularity, &c.

The other Authority I promised to cite, is Monsieur *Claud*, to whom the Bishop of *London* wrote about the same time, desiring his Opinion as aforesaid. Monsieur *Claud* returns him this answer, *All Reform'd Churches do acknowledge the Church of* England, *as a true Church; and I shall not be afraid to give that name to the holding of Assemblies apart, and separating from the publick Assemblies, and withdrawing themselves from under the Government of the Church: 'Tis real Schism. We do not enter into a comparison of your order with that under which we live, all are subject to inconveniencies, ours have hers, as well as yours: It is enough for us to know, that the same Divine Providence, which by an indispensible necessity, and by conjuncture of Affairs, did at the beginning of the Reformation, put our Churches under that of the Presbytery, has put yours under that of the Episcopacy; and as we are assured, that you do not despise our simplicity, so neither ought we to oppose our selves against*

your

your Preheminence. See both these Letters, and a third from Monsieur *L' Angle*, to the same purpose, at large in the latter end of Dr. *Stillingfleet's Misch. of Separ.*

Thus much for the foreign Divines. Now we will come nearer home, and see what our Dissenters themselves have thought of the Church of *England*, from which they separate.

First then, Several of the Dissenters, to avoid the imputation of *Brownism*, do sincerely profess, before God and all the World, That *they hold the Church of* England, *to be a true Church of Christ, with which they did, and would hold Communion, notwithstanding any defilement or unwarranted Power of Church Government exercised therein.* See the *Apologetical Narrative*, p. 5, 6. Again, They own that our Parochial Churches are true Churches, and that they can find no fault with the Doctrine of our Church, and that 'tis lawful and * sometimes a Duty to communicate with us. *Baxter's Defence of his Cure*, p. 38. and 64. *Corbet of Schism.* p. 41. *Peace-offering in the name of the Congreg. party. Anno Dom.* 1667. *p.* 10. *True way of Conc. part* 3. *c.* 1. *sect.* 40. and Mr. *Baxter*

* *If occasional Communion be lawful, constant is a Duty. See* Papers for Accomm. *p.* 47, 51, 56.

in his last Answer to *Bagshaw*, p. 30, 31. has these words, *You little know what pernicious design the Devil has upon you, in perswading you to desire and indeavour to pull down the interest of Christ and Religion, which is upheld in the Parish Churches of this Land, and to think that 'tis best to bring them as low in reality and reputation as you can, and contract the Religious Interest all into private Meetings.* And see also Mr. *Baxter's Plea for Peace*, p. 240. to the same purpose.

And lastly, Dr. *Owen* in his Book of *Evangelical Love*, p. 54. acknowledges, That *they look upon the Church of* England, *measuring it by the Doctrine received since the Reformation, to be as sound and healthful a part of the Catholick Church, as any in the World.*

I have now prov'd that Separation from a true Church is sinful, and schismatical; I have proved the Church of *England* to be a true Church; and all this I have proved from their own Writings. How will they now justify their Separation, or clear themselves from the imputation of Schism? What will they say to this? Is Schism not a sin? Or is their Separation from us not Schism? If they say it is not Schism: Why, then our Non-conformist Ministers know better what

what is Schiſm, than all the Learned Divines of the Church of *England*, and the moſt Eminent Men of all the Reformed Churches beyond Seas do. For I have ſhewed from their own words, That they do acknowledge the Church of *England* to be as true and ſound a part of the Reform'd Church, as any in the whole World, and condemn all thoſe that ſeparate from her as guilty of Schiſm. Doubtleſs theſe Men are as competent judges of Matters of Religion as any of our Diſſenting Miniſters. And I am ſure we have not the leaſt reaſon to believe they would flatter us, for they are ſtrangers who have no dependance upon us; and Men of more Piety and Honeſty, than to indulge us in any thing that is ſinful. But it may be they will ſay, that all theſe Learned Divines beyond Seas, who have acknowledged the Church of *England* to be a true Church, are ignorant of the Errors and Corruptions in her: But let me tell them, They might have a little more civility, than to ſuppoſe that ſo many godly upright Men, would raſhly give their judgment of Matters of ſo great moment as thoſe are which relate to Religion, before they were truly acquainted with the nature and circumſtances of the thing: And beſides, They

ought not to judge of other Men by themſelves: Becauſe the moſt of their own Divines are utter ſtangers to the practice and Conſtitution of other Churches, as appears ſufficiently by their Principles of Separation, muſt they believe others to be ſo too? No throughly accompliſh'd Divine can be ſuppoſed to be ignorant of the true ſtate and condition of any Reformed National Church, much leſs of ſo great and conſiderable an one as the Church of *England*. But to put this out of diſpute, it appears before that ſeveral of the moſt Eminent Men before-mentioned, were in *England* for ſome years, and frequented both the Churches and Meetings, on purpoſe to acquaint themſelves with both, in order to giving their judgment of them.

Since therefore the Doctrine of the Church of *England* is ſound, and the Worſhip true, and Government and Conſtitution of it as agreeable to that of the beſt and pureſt Ages of the Church, as any now in the World; let us in the name of God, lay aſide all thoſe fears and jealouſies that have poſſeſs'd the minds of too many of us, concerning it, and let us remember that not only the Peace and Proſperity of this Church and Nation, and of every particular Mem-

ber

ber of it, depends upon our Union, but of the Proteſtant Religion all over the World. Tho' there may be ſome things amiſs in the Church of *England*, it is not the buſineſs of private Men to Reform the Church, or diſpute the fitneſs or unfitneſs of every little impoſition. Their Duty is to Conform, at leaſt in the outward action, and ſubmit the fitneſs of ſuch things, to the Wiſdom of thoſe to whom God Almighty has intruſted the Government of the Church and Nation, they may reaſonably be thought more competent judges of what is convenient and fit to be done, or not to be done, than private Men can be. And if any thing be amiſs in the Government of the Church, or the manner of God's Worſhip, they are to anſwer for it, not the People. God will call them to an account for impoſing upon his People things not agreeable to his Will: But will never condemn us for doing our Duty in ſubmitting to ſuch Governors as he has placed over us. 'Tis true, there are ſome things in Religion which are eſſential to it, without which, Men cannot be ſaved. Now in caſe our Governours command us to act contrary to theſe, we ought not to obey, *for we muſt obey God rather than Men:* But 'tis agreed

on all sides, That the Church of *England* enjoins no such things, and that they who live godly, sober lives according to the Doctrine of this Church, are in a safe and ready way to Heaven.

But 'tis a difficult Matter for Men to forsake what they have been all their lives accustomed to; they cannot believe that Separation is so great a sin as we seem to make it: And that so many honest good People, and godly Ministers did live and die in sin. If they are resolv'd; they will not believe Separation from a true Church to be sinful, who can help that? The great number that have liv'd and dy'd in that Opinion, does not make the thing less sinful. The *Donatists* in the *African* Church, were more numerous that our *English* Dissenters are, and had 'tis likely, as many sober and learned Divines among 'em. For at the Conference at *Carthage*, they had 400 Bishops, yet these were condemn'd for Schismaticks by St. *Austin* and all the Catholick Bishops. And the things that these *Donatists* separated from the Church for, were for the most part the very same, that our present Dissenters make the cause of their separation from the Church of *England*. They thought the Bishopricks too large, and the Power of the Bishops too great.

great. They refus'd to join in Communion with the Catholicks, becauſe ſinners were admitted there. They forſook the Miniſters, becauſe they were not ſo agreeable to their humour as they would have them. * They would not ſuffer any to ſpeak in the Churches but the Miniſters, and ſtopt the mouths of all the People. They held that the Civil Magiſtrate had no Power to Reform the Church. They made a ſhew of greater Zeal for the Purity of Religion, than other People; and by their ſtiff, rigorous ſeverity which they ſhew'd, and the vehement out-crys which they made, that Diſcipline was not duly executed; Many of the People, not well grounded in the truth, were terrified, and turned unto them, believing them to be the moſt zealous holy Men, and the only true Church in the World. Finally they condemn'd all other Churches as not true Churches. See all this in *Gifford* (a Non-conformiſt Miniſter) his Book againſt the *Browniſts* 2. part. Theſe are the very pretences that our preſent Diſſenters make for their ſeparating from this Church. Our Biſhopricks are too large; our Churches not according to Chriſt's Inſtitution; our Miniſters unable, and ungodly;

* *Optatus Mileviani*, lib. 2. p. 47.

godly; our way of Worſhip falſe; our Magiſtrates aſſume an unwarranted Power in Church Matters. Yea, and in their over pretending to Purity and Godlineſs, they are exact *Donatiſts*, and by that very means do draw the more ignorant and zealous ſort of People to them, as the *Browniſts* did. No People pretend ſo much to Purity and Religion, as they do: In all places where they have their publick Meetings, they are ſure to begin before the Pariſh Churches, and end after, be they as long as they will: But yet go in to one of their Meetings, and you ſhall ſee as little ſigns of Devotion and as many of the People aſleep, as in any Pariſh Church in the Kingdom for the number. So in their common Diſcourſe, many of them will ſcarce allow themſelves ſo much liberty as to make them good company, for fear they ſhould happen to tell a lye; but yet in their Dealings, they will over-reach a Cuſtomer in a Bargain, and uſe as many equivocations to deceive him as any other People ſhall. But leaſt you think I do them wrong, let us hear what the learned Mr. *Baxter* ſays of them, (you won't believe that he would wrong them.) In his *Poor Man's Family Book*, p. 221. ſpeaking of ſuch who run into Parties by Diviſions, ſays he,

he, *Those injudicious sort of Christians having an over high esteem of their own Understandings and Godliness, and desiring to be made conspicuous for their Godliness, in the World, separate from ordinary Christians as below them, and unworthy of their Communion; these Sects have ever been the Nests of Errors.* And again, *ib. p.* 331. he bids us *beware of joining our selves to Separate Meetings, who pretend to stricter Discipline, and greater Purity, who set themselves up Factiously and Contentiously against the Concordant Churches, on pretence of greater Purity, whose Meetings are imployed in Reviling others, and Condemning other Churches, and puffing themselves up with Pride, as if they were the only Churches of Christ.*

But our Dissenters will say, This is a scandalous abuse to say, that they condemn all other Reformed Churches in the World. But I doubt they agree with the *Donatists* even in this. For I suppose they will condemn all those that account them Schismaticks. And this do all the Reformed Churches; for they all hold, that Separation from a true Church is Schism, and own the Church of *England* for a true Church, and consequently make them Schismaticks, and so have expresly declared them as appears before.

fore. Again, I ſuppoſe they will condemn all Churches that communicate with an Idolatrous Anti-Chriſtian Church, knowing her faults; ſome of them declare the Church of *England* to be ſuch a Church, and then they muſt condemn all the Reformed Churches which communicate with her.

Well, ſay the Diſſenters, *You of the Church of* England *have a great deal to ſay for your ſelves, and if all be true that you have told us, our Separation from you is ſinful and unreaſonable: But what reaſon have we to believe you; we have a great many able and godly Miniſters of our own, who tell us the quite contrary; 'tis certain they can't both be in the right, why may we not then believe your Miniſters may be deceived as well as ours?*

I anſwer, 'Tis not ſo likely that all the Divines of the Church of *England* that have been ſince the Reformation, ſhould be deceived in a thing of this nature, as that thoſe of the Non-conformiſts ſhould; Firſt, Becauſe they are much more numerous, and 'tis not ſo likely that a great many good Men ſhould be deceived, as a few; 'Tis a Rule in Logick, *Quod plures & ſapentiores teſtantur credibile eſt eſſe verum.* And Secondly, Becauſe

cauſe they have much better means to come to the knowledge of the Truth, than thoſe of the Non-conformiſts can pretend to; as will plainly appear by conſidering the Method taken on both ſides for the breeding up of Divines. Thoſe who are deſign'd for the Study of Divinity in the Church of *England*, are kept at the beſt Schools that can conveniently be had, till they underſtand Latin and Greek very well, then they are admitted into one of the Univerſities, where they are put under the Care of a particular Tutor, who is always one of the Fellows of the College, and conſequently, a Man well approved of by the whole College for his Learning and Sobriety; for by the Statutes of every College, none but ſuch are qualified for Fellowſhips. This Tutor has ſeldom above 20. Students under his Care at a time, and many of them not half that number; every Student comes twice a day to his Tutor's Chamber, to be inſtructed by him. And beſides this, the College appoints other Tutors, or publick Lecturers, who are to teach and inſtruct them in the publick Halls, ſome for Philoſophy, ſome for Diſputations, and other Exerciſes. Theſe publick Tutors are changed every year, which is a great Advantage to the Students, by acquainting

quainting them with the ſeveral Methods and Opinions of ſuch variety of Learned Men. Thus they ſpend the firſt four Years, and then after very ſtrict Examination by all the Fellows of the College, to which they belong, in the publick Hall for ſix days together; if they be found qualified, they commence *Batchelors of Arts*, if not, they are laid aſide till the next Year. After they have taken their *Batchelors* Degree, they begin to apply themſelves more particularly to the Study of Divinity, but are ſtill obliged to publick Lectures for Hebrew, Greek, and other parts of Learning neceſſary for that Study; and to publick Diſputations. And thus they ſpend three Years more, and then after a ſtrict and publick Examination as before, if they be found qualified, they commence *Maſters of Arts*, or *Doctors of Philoſophy*. And here obſerve, That no Man can hope to take his Degrees in any of the Univerſities, unleſs he be throughly qualified for it: No ſuch thing as Favour in the caſe, becauſe the Examinations are publick before all the Fellows and the Preſident of the College: And beſides that, every Man that is to take any Degree in any of the Colleges, is obliged by the Laws of the College, to ask the Conſent

Consent of every Man, particularly, who has ever taken the Degree of *Master of Arts* in that College, if they be at that time any where in or about the Town, and any one of these if he can shew Reason for it, as that he is a Man of a scandalous Life and Conversation, or of not sufficient Learning or such like, may stop him of his Degree. After they have taken their *Master of Arts* Degree, then is the time they usually enter into Holy Orders. Some few there are, who are admitted into *Deacons* Orders, after they have commenced *Batchelors of Arts*, but these are few, and are look'd upon but as young raw Fellows; so that generally those who are admitted to the Office of the Ministry in the Church of *England*, are Men who have spent at least seven Years in the Study of University Learning, in one of the two most Famous Universities in the World, with all the Helps and Advantages that are necessary for the perfecting of them in their Studies: For besides those aforesaid, they have the constant Conversation of so many Learned, Ingenious Men; the use of Great and Noble Libraries, Famous all over the World, (besides the particular Libraries belonging to each College: In which are to be found many

many Pieces of Antiquity and Ancient Manuſcripts, *&c.* not to be met with any where elſe, and which give great Light into Antiquity. And in each Univerſity they have Divinity Profeſſors, who are choſen out of the moſt Eminent Divines they have, whoſe buſineſs it is to hear Divinity Lectures read, and Points of Divinity diſputed on in the publick Divinity-Schools, to which all thoſe who deſign for that Study, are after ſome few Years obliged to attend. Neither do theſe Learned Men truſt only to their own Knowledge, but they have carefully ſettled a Correſpondence with all the moſt Eminent Men beyond Seas.

Theſe and many more are the Advantages of Education which the Divines of the Church of *England* have above thoſe of the Non-conformiſts, who are generally bred after this manner: A Non-conformiſt Miniſter perhaps, or ſome ſuch Perſon who lives obſcurely in ſome remote part of the Country, gets 30 or 40 Boys together, and there he teaches them common School-Learning, till they come to be towards 20 years of age, and then inſtead of entring them into the Univerſity, he enters 'em in another Chamber, perhaps 5 or 6 at a time, and there he teaches them Univerſity Learning,

as

as they call it; for 2 or 3 years it may be without the help of any Libraries, but the good Man's Closet, or any Converſation more than with one another, and with the Maſter, if he will honour them ſo far, and his aſſiſtant if he chance to have one. And ſo after 2 or 3 years Study at this rate, they are qualified for the Office of a Miniſter among them, and are thought fit to be intruſted with the Care of Souls, and Government of a Church. I own there are ſome few among them, who have had better Education than this is; but theſe are the general Methods taken for breeding up of Divines on both ſides, which is ſo well known, that none will have the Confidence to deny it. And now let any Man of reaſon judge, whether in Matters that depend ſo much upon Antiquity, and the Practice and Judgment of the Primitive Church, as the Controverſies between us and the Diſſenters do; whether I ſay are more likely to be miſtaken, all the Divines of the Church of *England*, or thoſe of the Diſſenters? *It is not ſo likely*, ſays Mr. *Baxter* in his *Poor Man's Family Book*, p. 222. *that God ſhould reveal his Mind to a few good Men, and thoſe of the rawer, injudicious ſort, and ſuch as are moſt infected with proud overvaluing their own*

Wiſdom

Wisdom and Godliness, and such as have had least Time and Study, and means to come to great Understanding, and such who shew themselves the proudest Censurers of others, and least tender of the Church's Peace, and such as are apt to break all to pieces among themselves; I say, 'Tis not so likely that these are in the right, as the main Body of agreeing, humble, godly, peaceable, studious Ministers, who have had longer time, and better means to know the Truth: And the Body of Christians, even the Church, hath more promises from Christ, than particular dividing Persons have. See all this, and more to the same purpose in this Book aforesaid, writ by Mr. *Baxter* himself.

So that had we no other Authority on our side, than that of the Church of *England*, 'twere much safer to rely upon their judgments in this Matter, than on the judgment of the Non-conformists; but it appears before that we have the Opinion of all the Reformed Churches in the World on our side; and if that won't turn the Scales, God Almighty must work a Miracle for their Conversion, as he did for St. *Paul*'s.

'Tis so evident that the Ministers of the Church of *England* have much the Advantage of those among the Dissenters, as to Learning and Knowledge, that they have no way left

to

to obviate this, but by down right diſclaiming at the Univerſity Learning, and calling them *Sophiſtical Divines*, who are bred up in vain and curious Arts.

* See *Brown* in his *Preface* to his Book. And Mr. *Baxter* in his *Defence of his Cure*, p. 124. tells us of a Church in *New England*, that ſeparated from a Church on the account of their Preachers having human Learning.

* *His Book of the life and manners of Chriſtians, note all the* Brownists *ſay the ſame. So did the* Donatiſts *in St.* Auguſtine's *time, condemn human Learning, but St.* Auguſtine *condemns their folly herein, in his 1ſt. Book againſt* Creſconius, *ch.* 14.

But perhaps ſome of our Diſſenters will own that our Divines of the Church of *England* are generally more learned than thoſe among them; (one of the moſt competent judges among them, Mr. *Baxter*, has own'd it fairly in his Anſwer to a certain Letter, *p.* 18. where he ſays, he has ſeldom heard any but very good and well ſtudied Sermons in our Churches, and on the other ſide, complains publickly of the weakneſs and injudiciouſneſs, and ſelf-conceitedneſs of too many of the Non-conformiſt Preachers, in his *Sacral. Deſert.* p. 86.) yet they will tell us, they deceive the People, and keep them all in ignorance for their own Intereſts, leaſt they ſhould loſe their Church Preferments.

This is a very ſevere Cenſure, to ſay, that ſo many Thouſand godly Miniſters as have been of the Church of *England* ſince the Reformation, and who have many of them died Martyrs for the ſake of it, ſhould be ſuch Villains as to deceive the People, and damn their own Souls, for the ſake of their Church Preferments.

But how can ſelf-intereſt oblige the Clergy to defend the Church of *England* as now eſtabliſh'd, if they thought it not agreeable to the Word of God? It muſt be either Pride or Covetouſneſs that muſt move them to it. If it were Pride, doubtleſs the Presbyterian or Independant way would anſwer that end much better; for whereas now the Parſons, Vicars and Curates of all the Pariſhes in *England* are ſubject to their reſpective Biſhops, *&c.* and can do nothing as to matters of Diſcipline or Government, *&c.* not even in their own Pariſhes, without the conſent of the Dioceſan Biſhop: Were the Conſtitution of the Church changed to that of the Presbyterian or Independant way, every Paſtor would become an abſolute Biſhop, and accountable to none for what he did. If it were Covetouſneſs that moved them to it, I ſuppoſe that were all the Parſons of every Pariſh in *England* made the Paſtor of that Church or Pariſh according to the

the Presbyterian or Independant Notion of a Pastor, and all the Diocesan and Metropolitan Bishopricks, and their Deans and Chapters dissolved, and their Revenue super-added to the present in-come of every Parish Minister or Pastor, their Church Livings would be no less, but more valuable than now they are. Why do they not then set about this change of Church Government as fast as they can, if they think in their Consciences 'twere more agreeable to God's will so to do? 'tis plain, 'twould better answer their Covetousness and Ambition, to pull down Episcopacy, than to live in this poor subjection that now they do. Here they will tell us, the reason is plain, because the Bishops, who are the Governours of the Church will not let them; they know the sweet of a fat Bishoprick too well to part with it, I warrant them. But the Thousandth part of the Clergy of *England* are not Bishops, nor perhaps never think to be so. Every one of these have a Vote in the Convocation, and doubtless may carry it against so small a number of Bishops as 27. were they not perswaded in their Consciences, that the Church of *England* as now establish'd, is as agreeable to the Will of God, as any other whatsoever.

Therefore since the Divines of the Church of *England* are more Numerous, and generally

more Learned, and can have no design upon the account of Self-interest, to deceive the People, 'tis safer sure in a doubtful case, to take their words, and trust to their judgments, than to those among the Dissenters, whose Interest it is to deceive the People, and make the breach between us as wide as they can, many of them being Men of no Fortune, and such as have no other way to get a Living, and Men who must needs be losers by an Union between us, be the Conformity of which side it will, whether they Conform to us, or we to them, for be the Government of the Church of *England*, either Episcopal or Presbyterian, or Independant; 'tis but reasonable that the Ministers who are lawfully put into the Cures, should continue therein still, as Pastors of their own Churches; so that the greatest part of the Non-conformist Preachers must be laid aside; for 'twere not reasonable that others who are as deserving as they, and lawfully settled in their Cures, should be turn'd out to make room for them, nor that Parishes should be divided all over the Kingdom, to furnish them with Churches. 'Tis likely that some of the Non-conformist Ministers who are better qualified than ordinary, might be provided for, should it please God, that there were an Union between us: But many of them I doubt,

doubt, could not; ſo that 'tis evident their Intereſt obliges the moſt of them to deceive the People, and keep open the breach as wide as they can. And that they really do ſo, is plain, by their making the Differences between us ſeem greater than really they are, and than they themſelves have own'd them to be in their Writings, as I have all along ſhewed: And alſo by their pretending to quote Authority for what they ſay, and either not mentioning the Chapter or Page where the Words are to be found, or elſe altering the very Words and Sence of the Author to ſerve their turn: If any one think I do them wrong, let them look into Dr. *Maurice* his *Defence of Dioceſan Epiſc.* p. 237. 335. 353. 377. 396. 442. 444. how Mr. *Clarkſon* to prove Epiſcopacy in the Primitive Church to be agreeable to the congregational or Independant way, has miſrepreſented the very Words and Sence of his Authors. You may find more Inſtances of this kind in the *Preface* to Dr. *Comber*'s *Defence of Liturgies*, 1ſt. part. And ſee how falſly Mr. *Baxter* has tranſlated *Theodoret*'s Epiſtle to ſerve his *Hypotheſis*. Dr. *Stillingfleet* his *Miſchiefs of Separation*, p. 261. And how he has miſrepreſented the Doctor's own words, *ib.* 131. 132 and 126. Many more Inſtances of this kind may be given, were

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it neceſſary, but what has been ſaid is ſufficient to ſhow that in Matters of Religion, where the caſe ſeems doubtful, and all the Divines of the Church of *England* agree on one ſide, and the Non-conformiſts only on the other; 'tis much ſafer to take the Opinion of thoſe of the Church of *England*, than of the others, becauſe they are more numerous, and generally more learned, and ſeem to have leſs reaſon to deceive us.

To all that has been ſaid, I ſhall only add this, That I have taken all the pains that poſſibly I could, to inform my ſelf truly of the Matters in Controverſy between the Church of *England*, and the Diſſenters; and did really believe the things Scrupled to be of much greater moment than I now find them to be. And tho' I for my own part, am ſatisfied in my Conſcience, that there is nothing at all injoin'd by the Church of *England*, but what is agreeable to God's Word, and the Opinion of the wiſeſt Men of the Church in all Ages, and what the moſt tender Conſciences may ſatisfie themſelves in, if they would but make uſe of the proper means; yet I could heartily wiſh that many things were laid aſide, if that would purchaſe an Union between us. If things which are allow'd to be in themſelves indifferent, as Poſtures, and Ceremonies, and

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ſuch like, were neither impos'd nor aboliſh'd, but left to the Diſcretion of every Chriſtian to uſe or not to uſe as he thinks beſt, and as the Ceremony of Bowing towards the Altar is, and ſome other alterations made, ſuch as you may ſee in the Propoſals offer'd to the Parliament for the Uniting of Proteſtant Diſſenters by Dr. *S.* Dean of St. *Pauls*, there could then be no reaſonable Pretence left for Separation. But if nothing elſe muſt purchaſe our Peace, but the overthrowing the whole Conſtitution of this Church, 'tis too dear a purchaſe, till we have found another to exchange for, more agreeable to God's Word, and more conſiſtent with the Peace and Tranquility of this Nation; but that we have not found yet, I am ſure, as is ſufficiently evident, by a plain experimental Proof, which theſe Nations lately had; 'tis very well known, that in the late unhappy times, when the Church of *England* Liturgy, *&c.* was taken away, the Presbyterians, Independants, and other Parties, pray'd one againſt the other, and againſt eſtabliſhing that way of Government, which others of them pray'd for; divers Perſons made their own Paſſions, ſingular Opinions, and Errors great part of their Prayers; others rejected all Confeſſions of ſins, as no part of their Devotions; in many places

places of *England*, the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was laid aside for 12 or 15 Years together, so was Infant Baptism; some would Pray for the King one way, some another, others not at all. And in that time that the Church of *England* way of Worship was laid aside, there were more Errors, Sects, Heresies, and Blasphemies broach'd and vented, than ever before or since: This is acknowledged by the Dissenters themselves, see a Book call'd *Gangrena*, part 1*st*. p. 175. writ about the Year, 1646. where many of them do acknowledge, That *we* (say they) *in these four last Years* (for so long had Presbytery been uppermost) *have overpassed the Deeds of the Prelates, in whose time never so great nor so many Errors were heard of, much less such Blasphemies, and Confusions, we have worse things among us, more corrupt Doctrines, and Practices, than in* 80. *Years before*, &c. So that if nothing must purchase Peace between us, but the parting with our Religion, and overthrowing our whole Constitution, to set up another, which Experience has taught us, is neither so consistent with God's Glory, nor the Peace of these Nations, they must excuse us. Besides, let me tell them, Their late Carriage in *Scotland*, has given us great reason to fear that the Religion they so much boast of, and with so much Zeal, endeavour to set up in this Nation, in the place of that which by God's good Providence is now Establish'd, is not the true Religion of Christ; for that never taught any to Affront and Revile his lawful Ministers, and to burn the Holy Scriptures, as they have done now more than once. *I pray God open their Eyes, and soften their Hearts, and give them Grace to Repent.*

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places of *England*, the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was laid aſide for 12 or 15 Years together, ſo was Infant Baptiſm; ſome would Pray for the King one way, ſome another, others not at all. And in that time that the Church of *England* way of Worſhip was laid aſide, there were more Errors, Sects, Hereſies, and Blaſphemies broach'd and vented, than ever before or ſince: This is acknowledged by the Diſſenters themſelves, ſee a Book call'd *Gangrena*, part *1ſt.* p. 175. writ about the Year, 1646. where many of them do acknowledge, That *we* (ſay they) *in theſe four laſt Years* (for ſo long had Presbytery been uppermoſt) *have overpaſſed the Deeds of the Prelates, in whoſe time never ſo great nor ſo many Errors were heard of, much leſs ſuch Blaſphemies, and Confuſions, we have worſe things among us, more corrupt Doctrines, and Practices, than in* 80. *Years before*, &c. So that if nothing muſt purchaſe Peace between us, but the parting with our Religion, and overthrowing our whole Conſtitution, to ſet up another, which Experience has taught us, is neither ſo conſiſtent with God's Glory, nor the Peace of theſe Nations, they muſt excuſe us. Beſides, let me tell them, Their late Carriage in *Scotland*, has given us great reaſon to fear that the Religion they ſo much boaſt of, and with ſo much Zeal, endeavour to ſet up in this Nation, in the place of that which by God's good Providence is now Eſtabliſh'd, is not the true Religion of Chriſt; for that never taught any to Affront and Revile his lawful Miniſters, and to burn the Holy Scriptures, as they have done now more than once. *I pray God open their Eyes, and ſoften their Hearts, and give them Grace to Repent.*

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